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# **Trading Lives: the commercial, social and political communities of the Zululand trading store**

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**Thesis submitted for the degree of PhD in  
Anthropology**

**2011**

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## Abstract

There are few trading stores in Zululand which are still run by white traders, and operate as they did in the past. Thus history and anthropology merge in telling their story. Today, many old traders live their lives inherently affected by their inheritance of trading, practicing a social and commercial legacy that has been instilled in them through the generations. Their ascendants, early and mid-20<sup>th</sup> century traders in Zululand, were 'pioneers' in a physical African wilderness. Whilst tied into practical lease agreements with authorities, they had to survive. This depended on their relationships and reciprocity with customers and their ability to negotiate the complex social and cultural space of rural people. These men and women were intimately connected to the communities that they served, who were dependant on the store for social and material needs. Simultaneously, despite their distance and isolation, the traders were part of greater supralocal ties which placed them within a vast lattice connecting them to other traders, as well as towns and cities.

The reciprocal interface with the societies that they served was reflected in their material culture, in which the architecture of the store buildings and their notional positions as "anamnestic repositories" has endured in the rural landscapes of KwaZulu-Natal. The buildings have endured in other memories, being replicated in contemporary times as Post-Modern *spaza* shops owned and run by black traders. Memory is the key to the construction of identity as 'trader', a perception which has endured long after trading ceased.

A discrete number of Zululand trading families were studied, working within the boundaries of Zululand as determined by the 1905 'Delimitation of Zululand Lands' Commission, until the mid-1970's when large parts of Zululand fell under the self-governing 'homeland' of KwaZulu.

**From the outset, this work has been dedicated to the memory of Dieter Reusch who was murdered in Msinga. He was shot working amongst people with whom he had been carrying out anthropological research for some 15 years**

## **Acknowledgements**

I am deeply indebted to many people who supported me in this research. Firstly to the traders who let me invade their lives and memories, stimulating ideas and connections which were strengthened by their ever-widening network of friends, family and associates, this tolerance is sincerely appreciated. Secondly, my ever patient supervisor, Dr. Trevor Marchand, thank you too for your immense capacity for reining in the eclectic, yet prompting the invisible and appropriate in the most gentle of fashions. My husband Alan has been invaluable for his company, support, encouragement and avid discussions which have been real and grounding contributions. Thanks to my family Tim and Jo who supported me whilst in London, and my father Peter, providing enduring perspective. Gratitude is noted to my mother Janet, for her painstaking reading, re-reading and correction.

Then, the community of Pietermaritzburg who attended my talks and offered ideas and comments, thank you, and my friends Andrea, Andrew, Birgit, Debby, Gina, Heather, Maureen and Nancy for their support, and faith in me and my completion of this work.

Thanks are due to Dylan Veldman for digitizing the diagram in Figure 6.3.

*It is the function of creative men to perceive the relations between thoughts, or things, or forms of expression that may seem utterly different, and to be able to combine them into some new forms -- the power to connect the seemingly unconnected.* - William Plomer, Poet



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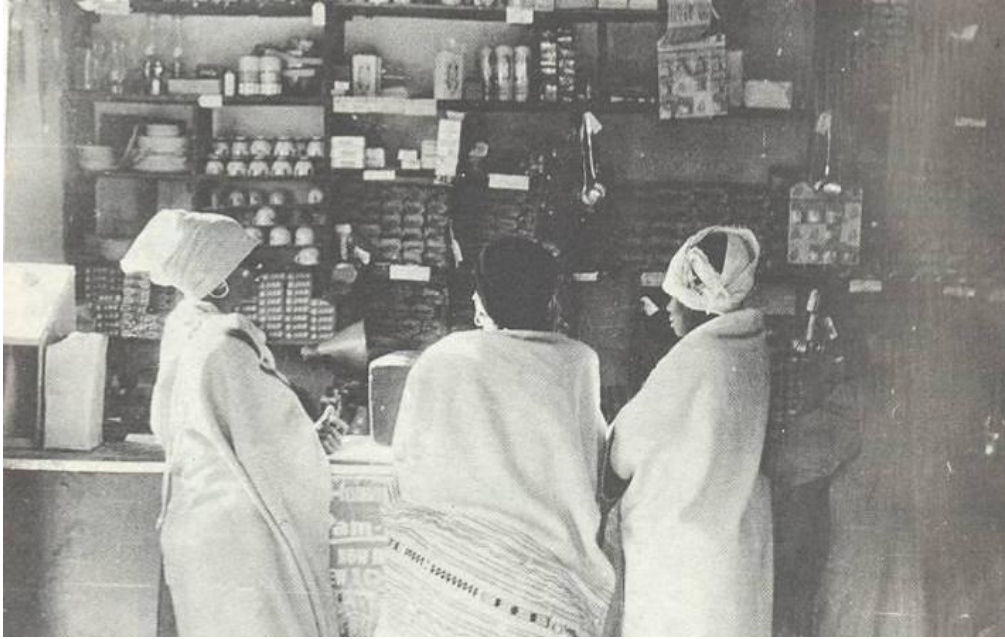
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This work specifically discusses the information and stories proffered by Zululand store owners, magistrates, customers or salesmen unless specifically acknowledged. In addition because the nature of this investigation is largely and necessarily lodged in social history, encoding of the names of the families studied is inappropriate and no names have been altered. This enables this research to form a small part of a necessary corpus of work dealing with critical and understated role-players in the formation of a democratic South Africa.

## Prologue: Welcome to our world



**(From Savage: 1960)**

The Europeans spoke Xhosa, and as locals usually were, seemed relaxed, unhurried, like their customers. I pushed my way through and stood at the counter next to a woman in the act of announcing that she had at last reached 'the moment of being about to buy'. She shouted. 'Come European, I am ready for you.'

Her shoulders were bare, for she had wound her shawl under her armpits and over the married woman's modesty bib in order to free her hands. She now lifted them to her huge turban. The brass bangles from wrist to forearm gleamed. She felt in the folds of the turban, extracted a knotted piece of rag which she placed on the counter before her, then resettled her turban, patting the folds back into place- all the while keeping up a powerful running commentary on the reasons why she had decided on the goods she had picked in preference to other specimens of the same, interrupting it to repeat, 'Come, European'.

Then she began to untie the knotted rag. She took out of it some pound and ten-shilling notes. They were grubby, and wrapped around coins: half-crowns, florins, shillings, sixpences, even 'tickeys' -the tiny silver threepenny bits.

Come man! What is the matter with this European- is he pretending not to want money?' Her every move was watched, men and women sucking their long pipes, eyes glued on her fingers as she fumbled. One man called out after the last tickey had been unwrapped, 'Where are the pennies and halfpennies?'

'Oh, I keep those in my purse,' she said. That in turn was inside a twill bag decorated with black piping and suspended from her waist. She counted out the money....She counted out the money a second time, and a third time through, then paused. She raised her face to the ceiling and burst out in loud lament, 'Oh God, these Europeans are killing me! Why do you kill me, European, taking all my money?'

I leapt back a step for she 'threw' her voice like an actress, within inches of my ear. You could have heard her from the back row of a theatre, yet the shopkeeper was only across the counter. He was not disturbed but replied quietly, blandly in Xhosa, his brown eyes scanning the money spread out in front of him, 'Have you not come of your own volition then, to be killed?' 'But you are truly killing me!'

He did not answer immediately and a chorus of male and female voices rumbled in jovial laughter... They stood at ease, mothers hoisting babies more securely on backs or hips, men changed knobkerries from one hand to the other, and taking pipes out of mouths, commented,



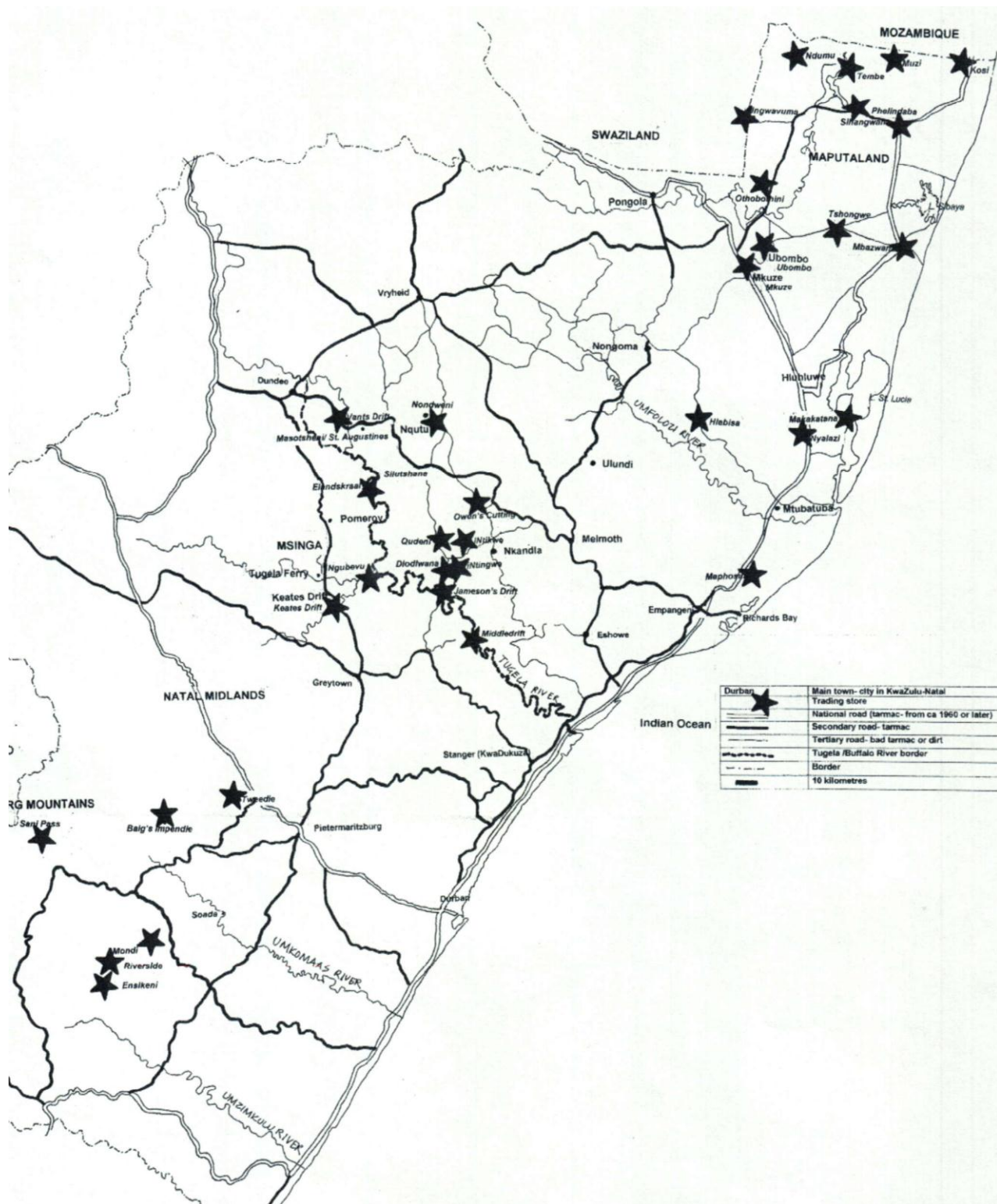
'Are you deaf, European? Did you not hear what she said? She has worked a whole month for the money which you stand looking at as if you would like to swallow it.'

'Look at his Adam's apple, how it moves up and down. Swallowing already. She is right. Being killed we are, wretched black people. We toil, kill ourselves for you. Then you kill us again, swallowing the money back- eh?

The shopkeeper said, as if making an effort not to smile, 'Of course I must swallow, if you force your money down my throat. Now look here lady, what about it, are you buying or not? Because I will put these things back on the shelf if you don't want them.' 'No, oh, no! Why such a hurry? I am still counting, man.'

'She is still counting European! Leave her. It is not your dinner time yet.' A burst of laughter, for pagans do not eat at midday, only morning and evening and think Europeans (and 'school' people) very soft. The woman was arranging the coins in little heaps, pausing now and then to stroke her chin. She seemed thoughtful of a sudden and at last cried, 'My! But I have not got the money you want, don't you see, European? *Andinayo mos!* Oh problem, problem! To be solved how?' Her tone was no longer bantering. Again that unselfconsciousness. There was a hush. Everybody counted the coins with their eyes, saw that she was a few shillings short. She had made more purchases than planned when originally wrapping the money into the rag, then turban, then setting off for town. Now she moaned, 'Yu-u-u!' I have walked all this way- nine miles! Even stung myself the bus-fare, and now not enough money. Yet I need those things!' She looked at them, gave a low whistle and shook her head dolefully from side to side. The hush around her deepened in sympathy until it seemed reverential. Everyone participated in her predicament....The atmosphere was tense.

At last the European made a suggestion, quietly at first and with a straight face, '*Tandaza*,' then repeated more clearly that everyone should hear, 'Pray, good lady.' However tense, the people are ready to laugh and the advice brought the house down. The woman jumped, looked at her shopkeeper. The onlookers laughed still more. Their laughter made her turn and she swept an arm round at them and cried out, but now with a broad smile, 'You hear him. Hey! These Europeans are silly- eh? Are they not getting out of hand? What does he know of prayers?' She moved farther as she spoke and now her back was turned to him. His face was stern, but the eyes twinkled while his customer harangued the crowd. At last he broke into a laugh, exclaimed 'Well-well!' in Xhosa, 'Ye-haal!' 'You, a pagan, ask me a Christian such as question. Who is the silly one? Tell me that! You know well that I know prayer'. 'Where-from? 'Church of course. Me, I kneel every Sunday. My knees are red with kneeling every Sunday.'... But the European went on, his face expressionless. 'here is my advice, since you ask me to solve this problem that you have made for yourself: put your hand in that turban again and feel for t-h-a-t O-T-H-E-R money that you are still saving in there, doubtless for your church collection, since it seems as I am getting praying church-women in my shop these days. Pay me from that and you can take your goods home. Then pray for your church, dear red girl who is much prized- because you would have squandered its money. His Xhosa was exquisite. She clapped her hands together as if too scandalized to speak. When she found her tongue, she made comments tart and coarse, bucolic. Then she doubled up with laughter- a kaleidoscope of mood changes- at the jokes he was making against her; and everyone joined in her laughter- a tremendous din. But I noticed that in the hubbub, the trader started to wrap the goods in a parcel. While he tied the string round it, he muttered under his breath making idiomatic jokes. (Jabavu;1982:65)



**Preface: Map of KwaZulu-Natal showing stores**

## Chapter 1: Defining the problem and describing the approach

*Everyone knows a trader, can remember a trading store...*

The aim of this chapter is to detail the background to the investigation, to situate the research methodologically and theoretically and to review the literature directly relevant to the research. It describes the pertinence of the study in a post-apartheid South Africa in which the hegemonic taught histories of the 20<sup>th</sup> century are layered against new histories created by the current government, neither of which recognize the relationships discussed.

- **Defining the trading store**

The iconic trading store is known as a country store, general trader or general store. Until recently these rural, largely free-standing structures provided goods and ancillary services to remotely situated communities, usually in which the trader was white or Asiatic and the customers black. Although these institutions are found across the eastern seaboard and interior of the African continent, those found in KwaZulu-Natal, a province comprising the historic territories of Natal and more particularly Zululand, are the focus of this research.

The trading store together with the mission station was the first point of interaction with western economies for many indigenous societies. Academics readily document the grander social and political monuments of the past such as churches, mission stations and governmental buildings, a convention which negates structures such as the modest trading store which had as important a role in our communal development and what we are as Africans today. Often elevated<sup>1</sup> from the valley floor and sited at socially and geographically marginal places, they provided a non-partisan locus of commerce and social support for people that lived in tribal societies, as well as acting as valuable conduits between the world of officialdom and the city, and rural areas.

Superficially these were utilitarian structures built in the local architectural vernacular of colonial settler, indigenous or a mixture of both. They were sited in specific places to sell goods to people. However, they rapidly became a centre

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<sup>1</sup> The noted Barrie Biermann, Professor of Architecture (University of Natal 1952-1989) compared these stores to 'temples in the landscape', after the siting of classical Greek temples.

of more extended services, in which successful traders operated post offices, informal banks, doctors' rooms, court rooms and tax collection venues, providing a platform for a variety of social and economic functions which today are taken for granted. These ancillary services cemented the trader to the store creating a powerful association between person, structure and service. The trading store floor became a place of lively engagement, evidenced by the excerpt in the preface. Although the buildings may have been modest, physical, commercial and social value gave them a tophophilia quality (Bachelard 2001:89). These buildings were altered with legislation, fashion and prosperity, often adopting the prescriptions of the Modernist architectural movement of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century which dictated an associated new 'style'.



**Figure 1.1: Trading store at Elandskraal (Photo: Author 2006)**

This new 'style' comprised a specific architectural 'tool-kit' of elements, the combination of which created a new but still recognizable structure which advertised its purpose, to sell goods to people. Like the original stores, a purely commercial association of physical structure with commodity was supplemented by the metaphysical possibilities that the stores offered, entrenching an habitual association. A group of Zulu-speaking students reinforced this, reacting to the description of a parapet wall<sup>2</sup> with 'Oh Ma'am! You mean *trading store* style!' Instant recognition of the 'trading store' as a specific building type and interpretation as part of a commonly constructed landscape based in memory, inferred that this building form is specifically connected with a specialized function which has minimal political baggage.

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<sup>2</sup> Defined in Curl as a 'Low wall or barrier at the edge of a balcony, roof, terrace, or anywhere there is a drop and, and therefore danger of persons falling (Curl 1999:481). They are a common feature of the architectural 'tool-kit'.

- **The *spaza* shops**

Despite their value, few trading stores still operate. In the last three decades their commercial role in communities has been replaced by a spawn of smaller, more compact shops constructed in the architectural idiom of the Modernist-derived trading store. Colloquially known as *spaza* shops,<sup>3</sup> they sell limited goods and have little or no capacity for any form of social extension. For many, these scaled-down operations have replaced the large trading stores of old.



**Figure 1.2: *Spaza* shop near Appelsbosch (Photo: Author 2006)**

The proliferation of the *spaza* is puzzling. Had the trading stores been perceived as symbols of oppression in the grand narratives of post-apartheid South Africa, surely their form would not have been replicated as it has in the *spaza*? It is suggested that the trading stores which operated throughout the Colonial, Union and apartheid periods assumed little political or cultural association, and that this is testimony to their perceived non-partisan status in communities. This supposition reinforced the extension of the scope of study from an architectural material culture perspective, to one that sought to interrogate the social and commercial nodes that these stores provided, and on which they depended. Hence the various elements of this research hang centrally on the physical structure, and the manner in which it was conceived, perceived and adopted. This was the physical stage of social interaction, commercial dealings and authoritarian links and it is from the centrality of the trading store buildings that the stories evolve, and ultimately, return.

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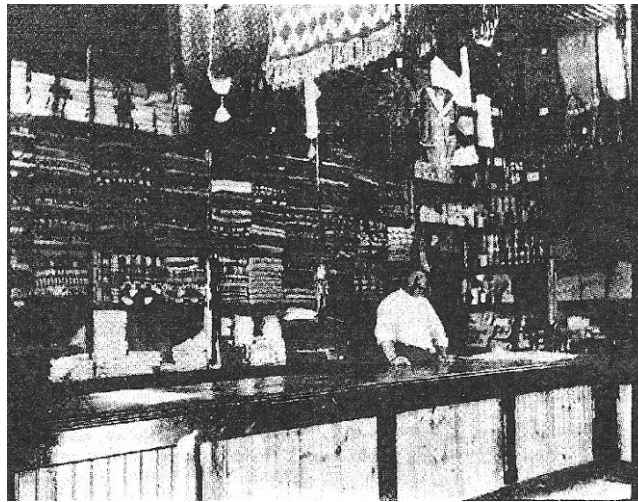
<sup>3</sup> These are small shops in the same architectural format as the trading stores and are dealt with in greater detail in Chapter 4. Adrian Koopman describes it as thus: 'A *spaza* is a mini shop, often housed in a shipping container. It is frequently placed on a road verge and sells basics such as cooldrinks, snacks, cigarettes, sweets, etc' (Koopman 2000). Whilst Koopman concentrates on the urban form, the rural '*spaza*' is determined by scale and contents. Christian Rogerson described the *spaza* as being part of an urban context, and operating out of a home (Preston-Whyte & Rogerson 1991). Rural people refer to them as *spaza* shops.



- **Place in memory**

The place in memory that the trading stores occupy is a core theme of this research, and the manner in which the materiality of the buildings acts as hooks for intangible recollections is suggested in the concluding idea of the building as a repository of memory, establishing a vital connection between the two.

Trading stores have recently closed for many reasons. Today most are abandoned or demolished and some, partly reoccupied, sell limited goods. Yet for many, the mere word 'trading store' is deeply evocative, as they form part of their lives and reminiscences. Once vital parts of rural communities trading stores are now generally relegated to the realms of history and memory.



***Figure 1.3: Umfolozi Store owned by Otto Anderson ca 1914 (Photo: Errol Harrison)***

The rupture between the mutated stores in a dynamic present and those in a nostalgically static past, informed an approach which situated objects in memory and experience. Tangible and identifiable, the buildings simultaneously evoke sensual connotations of texture, smell and sound. Suturing the physical present and the remembered past was achieved by using these inert structures to foreground dynamic memories, interrogating the link between structure and recollection.

Historically, trading stores were the focus of an inherent social complexity in rural areas, creating a valuable social interface between people of different cultures and allowing for links far beyond the immediate environment. These relationships, many still extant, were contrary to those officially sanctioned. The multi-dimensional social intricacy which developed around trading stores could enrich the new thin histories, which are being actively rewritten (Witz 2003).

### ○ **The personalities**

Whilst I write, Dawn Irons renovates some old buildings at her orphanage at Ubombo which will house more children and accommodate volunteers. Her husband David is on the 'Lowveld' at Tshongwe Store, some 20 kilometres down the mountain, perhaps recounting the details of the Battle of Tshaneni<sup>4</sup> or the Mkuze political bombings in the 1980's. Florence Bateman and her sister Jean Aadnesgaard are most probably carrying out personally-funded, desperately needed hospice work in rural areas remote from clinics and doctors. Stephen Cope smokes whilst negotiating an appropriate punishment through the mediation of a local elder. The wrongdoer, a child who has been caught shoplifting in his store before, is an orphan and survives on a cobbled-together set of income sources with vestigial guidance from a grandparent. Hugh Morrison compiles a staff roster at his luxury lodge before departing with a tour group of wealthy foreigners, regaling all with tales of his birthplace and childhood memories of Lake Store at Makakatana. His brother Keith endures another frustrating meeting with Land Claims Commission officials wanting to expropriate the farm he has worked for three decades. Geoff Johnson is anxious to play a game of golf before returning to his store of nearly 60 years' trading to assist the new owners with stock logistics. Peter Rutherford watches cricket in Barbados whilst his wife Sue manages the quotidian operation of their trading empire. Heinz Dedekind brokers a deal with Eskom to restore power to a local school, tired of lodging complaints to the service provider. All of these people belong to families who traded in rural Zululand. Their lives have been significantly determined by generations of trade, and their memories of storekeeping contribute to forming an enduring identity as 'trader'.

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<sup>4</sup> The uSuthu Zulu and Boer forces combined against Zibhebhu of a separate Zulu faction in June 1884. It was fought against "Ghost Mountain" named after the 'spirits' left behind.

- **Aims and objectives**

The aim of this research is to understand why trading store buildings have a place in memory and to investigate how recollections act in order to further valorize them.

The objectives of this study are to interrogate the value of the trading store building, both as a material and an abstract object, and to evaluate its connection with its broader functions in the trading and customer community. This latter, intangible aspect is supported by the memories of the traders, in that their stories form an ethnography which substantiates the remembered role of the trading stores and the traders that operated them.

These aims and objectives informed the following questions:

Why is the generic trading store building so lodged in communal memory, and what does its space reveal about the various and complex relationships of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Zululand traders? How are the memories of this social and material culture manifested today? The challenge in presenting this work is to suffuse the materiality of the trading store structures with the immateriality of the memories that they evoke, and the intangibility of the memories of trading with the legacy that they created. The intention is to present the two separate threads as concurrently as possible, so as to not lose sight of the buildings. Chapter 2 thus facilitates this by offering a brief overview of salient events in the history of trading in KwaZulu-Natal. This is supplemented by a discussion on pertinent vernacular architectures of the trading store, in order to lay a foundation for the changes that these buildings underwent. Extra information on historical periods and concepts such as 'Union' and 'Rainbow Nation', and basic notes on the ethnographies of the Zulu, Hlubi and Tembe/Tsonga referred to in the text, are found in the Appendix.

The first ethnographic chapter is Chapter 3. It retains a chronological framework and discusses the ramifications of politics on traders, trading and their stores. It describes alterations in the store structures resulting from changing legislation, leading to the formation of an architectural idiom. Chapter 4 discusses the commercial aspects of trade, and how businesses could expand or reduce their



size and operation. It defines the trading store among other similar institutions in order to highlight the necessary social elements that follow in Chapter 5, the final ethnographic chapter. This expands on the sociality of the trader and the trading space, and explores its contribution to historical and contemporary rural communities. Since the crux of trade was the public aspect, this section discusses traders' social lives as experienced between traders and static communities formed through familial, religious and organizational links, in addition to mobile connections such as 'travelers' and magistrates.

Chapter 6 analyzes the building and its ability to induce recollection, suggesting that as a memorial it has a role as a repository of memory. It continues by discussing the position of these traders in their lives, how their memories structured them and contributed to constructing their identity.

This work will present the lives of traders and their varied relations as an integral part of the trading store building in order to highlight the seamlessness of the structure with the social and commercial aspects of trade. It will valorize the building as a critical locus of social, political and commercial systems which are determined by it and reciprocally determine it, and finally suggest why this structure and institution has become so strongly celebrated in local memory.

## **1.1 Literature review**

A variety of themes have been explored in order to understand the buildings and traders within their physical and social landscapes. This section serves to outline the theoretical approach, as well as introducing the discourse on discrete themes of study.

The place that the trading store occupies in memory is contextualized with the discussion on landscape and monument, developing the idea that the materiality of the trading store acts as a repository for memories. This recollection stimulates other memories which are vital in the construction of identity. As members of marginal societies, traders occupied what was for them a social and physical frontier, and the stories that emanate from this context are those which reflect a nostalgic bravado and contribute in large part to identity formation. Finally, this section reviews publications which provide points of entry into the discussions which follow in the subsequent chapters. One must bear in mind the concurrent threads of memory and material evidence.

- **General theoretical framework**

Stephen Tyler noted that 'A post-modern ethnography is a cooperatively evolved text consisting of fragments of discourse intended to evoke in the minds of both reader and writer an emergent fantasy of a possible world of commonsense reality' (Tyler 1986:125). Traders view their world as a 'commonsense' reality, and their articulation of this exists in the form of text and memory. Some of it is linear and organized, some of it is jumbled, but all of it collectively adds up to a similar way of understanding the world.

Analyzing information collected from participant observation and interviews is based on the understanding that most of the data is a collection of fragments, subjective stories and multiple viewpoints, all of which present ritual bravado and nuanced nostalgia. It is understood that the information is anecdotal, based on everyday life and experience, and involves a plurality of voices. A general theoretical framework of Post-Modernism is adopted to understand these as palimpsests of memory and experience, which are ever changing and

developing with the telling and re-telling. More fixed points corroborating texts such as maps, reports and other accounts, are presented as their own stories.

Post-Modernism as a theme bleeds through the interpretation of the landscape in which these stores are situated. Barbara Bender considers the different actors and their roles within and on a landscape, creating the different identified layers that contribute to the understanding of landscapes and material culture, and the way in which fragmented societies or users have differing perceptions of them (Bender 1998, 2001). Past interpretations of landscape often differ from current perceptions by people within the same society, and these individual palimpsests need to be comprehended within the same language group, let alone between cultural groups. Charles Jencks suggests further that spanning the schism in histories and landscapes as experienced by different generations can help to bridge gaps between these interpretations and discourses, supporting an 'acknowledgement of legitimacy' (Jencks 1992:3). Interpreting the trading store and trade involves a number of cultures with different view points and approaches to the landscape, together with a study straddling generations with different world views and different ways of seeing. Therefore presenting a series of superimposed and contrasted vignettes where possible, tells the individual stories in their own space and time. Post-Modernism is employed as a tool to comprehend these snippets, comprising dialogue and other primary sources such as memoir.

Similarly, Post-Modernism<sup>5</sup> is relevant in the second thread. The initial challenge involved understanding the old store buildings as they stood, as well as the relationship between them and the contemporary *spaza*. This suggested the use of a specifically architectural theoretical framework in order to investigate the different characters of old and new store structures, in order to explain them in the context of a markedly altered South Africa.

The academically imposed terms 'vernacular' or 'regionalist' are appropriate means of description for the first structures erected when the traders arrived. However, it is evident that Modernism as an architectural genre arising from

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<sup>5</sup> The use of capital follows the spelling of 'Post-Modern', discussing architecture (Jencks 1984). For the purposes of the balance of this work, the architectural convention of capitalized letters will be adopted when discussing both architectural and other, Post-Modernity.

early and mid-20<sup>th</sup> century responses to new materials and industrial progress is an appropriate descriptor for the new trading store buildings from the late 1950s onwards. In contrast, the recently constructed *spaza* shops present an enigma. These buildings have proliferated in unprecedented numbers, becoming an accessible but thinly veneered copy of the original. They don't subscribe to any particular architectural paradigm, and can possibly be interpreted using theories of architectural Post-Modernity, as explained by Robert Venturi and Charles Jencks (Venturi 1966, 1992).

Post-Modernism is thus used as an appropriate general theoretical framework in order to understand the contemporary *spaza* stores. It constructs dialectic in which the social, political and commercial position that they currently occupy is compared with the contexts within which their ancestors operated. In a much-altered 21<sup>st</sup> century characterized by fragmentation evident in proliferation and commodity, the diagnostic features of Post-Modernism such as systems of double-coding<sup>6</sup> are appropriate in being able to understand the *spaza* shops (Jencks 1992:11). Firstly, since it was established that the building form is a metaphor for wealth, the iconography of the Modernist trading store is lifted directly in the construction of *spaza* shops which subscribe to the tenets of Post-Modern architecture in their pluralism, mimicry, metaphor and paradox. What Evans and Humphrey refer to as a 'skeumorphic slippage' is evidenced in the translation of most of the metaphor, but not all (Evans and Humphrey 2002:207). Secondly, the interface between memory and building leads to the concluding idea of anamnestic repository. As is its nature, anamnesis, or memory, operates at a level of intangible palimpsests, reducing the actual form of a specific store to a generic onto which memories are pinned.

These recent re-interpretations of older, Modernist trading stores by emergent entrepreneurs are not the 'trading stores' which are the focus of this work, but they subscribe to Robert Venturi's coda of narrowing the gap between the 'architect' and the 'man in the street' (Evers 2003:792, Venturi 1972). Although a Venturi-advocated strip-mall culture is not indicated or embraced by the *spaza* shops, the latter embody acceptability, recognition and comfort, with their

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<sup>6</sup> Rather than viewing the phenomenon of Post-Modernity in binary opposites (Harvey 1992:304), Jencks sees it as a synthesizing idea - 'it is a hybridization, a complexification of modern elements with other ones, that is a double coding' (Jencks 1992:12).

commodities being the essential elements of globalization such as cellular-phone airtime and Coca-Cola. Where the pluralistic goal of Post-Modernism removes the focus from the elite to increase accessibility, although the architectural form of the *spaza* shop may carry the primary encoding of the previously considered 'elite' trading store, it now stands as an architectural manifestation of the 'man in the street' (Jencks 1992:12). This fragmentation of the original is resonant. Jencks suggests that 'Post-Modernism...does not seek to turn the clock back...but rather a restructuring of modernist assumptions with something larger, fuller, more true' (Ibid:11).<sup>7</sup> Similarly, the *spaza* restructures the Modernist assumptions.

Post-Modernism is the tool for analyzing these stores in the landscapes of nostalgia and memory, and will be discussed further in Chapter 6. Pierre Nora suggests the idea of *Lieux de mémoire* as a baseline for contextualizing palimpsests and concepts (Nora 1989). In the event of major ruptures in society and history, he suggests that a compilation of ideas and concepts become places on which to pin memories. Thus, the concept of *Lieux de mémoire* (sites of memory), in absence of the now defunct *Milieux de mémoire* (Environments of memory), interrogates the placing of store buildings in collected memories, (as suggested by Young 1993:xi), and facilitates their presentation through different lenses, creating 'anamnestic repositories'.

From other perspectives, situating these structures and lives theoretically within altered political imperative is pertinent. The physical and idiomatic change in store structures and their proliferation as *spazas* is directly related to legislations emerging from the opposing doctrines of apartheid and the outwardly liberal 'Rainbow Nation'. It is connected to the rapid paradigm shifts of a global economy, and is situated in a period of political uncertainty. In particular, the trend to dialectically pit the 'new' South Africa against the 'old' means that Post-Modernism in all of its ambiguity is relevant in understanding the architecture, in the context of a structured modernist apartheid period. This national reinvention contemporary with globalization and post-apartheid society

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<sup>7</sup> The *spaza* shops may not appear as true or honest next to the trading stores in an architectural sense, but perhaps in a social and egalitarian sense, they are.

is consistent with Jencks's view of Post-Modernism as a 'world view' (Jencks 1992:10).

Structure and its memory lead to the themes of heritage and monument. Defining either is contentious in a South Africa which is rejecting elements of its ruptured past rather than learning from them, and simultaneously rewriting many of its histories. David Hart and Sarah Winter cite Tomaselli *et al* on tensioned South African identity, elaborating that these stresses construct the 'fine dialectic' between individual and collective, conflicting and common identities'.

In view of South Africa's history of cultural oppression and the complex nature of its society, there is a lack of consensus as to what constitutes a South African identity or nation. Therefore, as expressions of a new South African identity, the challenge lies in the ability of our new National Monuments to express what Tomaselli and Mpofu (1997) term 'South Africa's creative tensions. (Tomaselli & Mpofu, cited in Hart & Winter 2001:88)

This infers that the contemporary instigation and presentation of 'monument' is infinitely more sensual and interpretive than the tangible Modernist edifice. At the same time, where David Lowenthal suggests that contemporary attitudes towards heritage focus on the modest rather than the monumental, the grand narratives of the apartheid era such as Nelson Mandela, the Freedom Charter, Robben Island, Freedom (as an idea) and Exiles (as an idea), are currently being immortalized and interpreted (Lowenthal 2006:502). An exercise such as renaming streets in the city of Durban after alleged freedom fighters most of whom are unknown to the general public, has become a grand narrative in itself. It lacked sensitivity, public participation and subscription to democratic principles. Manipulating the past for political and financial gain is not new. Beverley Butler cites Merriman<sup>8</sup> (1996) and Meltzer (1985) to the effect that the heritage industry was used to legitimize 'the American Dream' in the same way it was used to legitimize apartheid (Butler 2006:468). Heritage is a tool to justify the new political dispensations.

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<sup>8</sup> These citations are not featured in the references to the section by the author.

Ironically, given the neo-liberal focus on subaltern African voices, highlighting the contribution of white traders in Zululand in a country of re-marginalized histories supports David Harvey's declaration that, 'The idea that all groups have a right to speak for themselves, in their own voice, and have that voice accepted as authentic and legitimate is essential to the pluralistic stance of postmodernism' (Harvey 1992:307).

- **The multiple vernaculars**

The identification and subsequent analysis of the African-generated *spaza* shop within an architectural framework is dependent on the body of literature which addresses vernacular structures. It is vital to discuss them as they not only affect the physical store form and materiality, but they contextualize the trading store in a greater architectural landscape. Furthermore, it is important to be able to adjudicate the extent to which the contemporary *spaza* has been appropriated against the extant vernaculars of the Zulu people. This discussion is developed in Chapter 6 and culminates in Figure 6.3 which situates trading stores and *spaza* shops as a result of internal and external dialectic forces within local vernacular architectures.

Three main strands of the local vernacular architectures exist. The primary vernacular is the indigenous vernacular which, according to Paul Oliver<sup>9</sup>

...comprises the dwellings and all other buildings of the people. Related to their environmental contexts and available resources they are customarily owner or community built utilising traditional technologies. All forms of vernacular architecture are built to meet specific needs, accommodating the values, economies and ways of living of the cultures that produce them. (Oliver 1997:preface)

The second, settler vernacular of early traders in Zululand was usually European-derived, based on masonry construction which mimicked their architectural ancestors in the towns and abroad. The third category is hybrid; a mixture of settler architecture and, to some degree, the indigenous vernacular. Hybrid architecture is relevant, since despite its occurrence parallel with *spaza* shops, little appropriation and mixing of idiom has occurred.

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<sup>9</sup> Further comment will be made on the inclusion of settler vernaculars and 'designed' buildings.

Vernacular architecture has been well documented. Seminal works were published in the 1960s; Fitch and Branch (1960) and Bernard Rudofsky (1964) were examining largely 'primitive' buildings constructed 'without architects'. These early vernacular studies documented buildings constructed of locally available materials subscribing to endemic social and cultural norms, from a relativistic point of view. Amos Rapoport's seminal *House Form and Culture* followed in 1969, aiming to synthesize the cultural aspects of the vernacular tradition with the empirical, using a more phenomenological approach. Paul Oliver then assumed the position of *doyenne* of vernacular architecture, publishing a number of books through the 1970s (Oliver 1969, 1971, 1975). These all display a development, evolution and expansion of the discourse, eventually removing it from its lodgment in the domain of 'primitive' and exotic architecture to the realm of the quotidian and mundane.

To valorize the physical trading store building in its architectural context, it is important to give a brief background to the specific vernacular architecture of the customers (indigenous), as well as that of the traders (settler), in order to substantiate the discussion of the Venn diagram found in Figure 6.3.

Predating Fitch and Branch, James Walton's *African Village* (1956) analyzed the beehive hut or *iQhughwane*, recognizing the subtle differences in the Xhosa, Sotho and Natal Nguni examples. He took care to inscribe the names of components, and recognized difference by alluding to the Swazi hut as being 'almost identical' to that of the Natal Nguni (Walton 1956:130). Walton referred in passing to the little-studied buildings of the Tembe (Tsonga), describing the characteristic lifting of the finished roof onto the dwelling as opposed to the Zulu manner of constructing the roof on top of the walls (Ibid:138). Where other researchers have presented the Zulu building as being generic (Biermann 1971, Denyer 1978, Oliver 2003), Walton gave it a multiple identity; he described the southerly incursion of the now prolific cone-on-cylinder or *rondawel* into the grasslands, admitting that the beehive dome was not the only vernacular architecture of the Zulu people (Walton 1956:128). Walton thus recognized the varied architectural landscapes of Zululand in which traders would have positioned themselves, documenting them after 1947 when stores were rebuilt in a Modernist style.



Barrie Biermann worked closely with Walton, and is noted for his work on the Zulu dwelling in the 1970s (Biermann 1971:96-105). However, he did not explore the variety and extent of the options that comprise Zulu architecture as intimated by Walton. Rather Biermann concentrated on the grass beehive dome, *iQhugwane*, which he refers to as an *iNdlu*. He situated the structure historically, and dealt with its components in terms of function and name, thus engaging with the integrity of the building as a culturally produced item. Ironically, the most valuable research on the *iQhugwane* was undertaken by Werner Knüffel amongst the amaNgwane people,<sup>10</sup> a group who do not consider themselves Zulu (Knüffel 1975). *The Construction of the Bantu Grass Hut*, documented in the Central Drakensberg Mountains, is the only anthropological investigation with an architectural focus carried out on 'Zulu' material culture.

Franco Frescura's comprehensive work *Rural Shelter in Southern Africa* (1981) should be mentioned. It is broad in focus, encompassing all the 'traditional' architectures of the many ethnic groups in South Africa. It however, contains little information on indigenous architectures in Zululand, and fails to acknowledge regional variants. Frescura has constructed a reasonably rigid evolutionary tree of the 'developments' of traditional architecture, whereas different forms generally co-existed, sometimes in the same area.

James Fernandez conducted more recent research, investigating the spatial perceptions of the Zulu homestead and its residents rather than the material culture itself, drawing tenuous comparisons with the Mina and the Fang (Fernandez 2003 [1984]:187-203).

The architecture of the Tembe/ Tsonga is poorly documented and two articles by Dennis Claude remedy this to some degree (Claude 1997, 1999). These semi-anthropological texts were vital in differentiating Tembe/Tsonga homesteads from their Zulu counterparts in the field, and assisted in identifying marginal areas occupied by both Tembe and Zulu people. This established

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<sup>10</sup> The *iNkosi* of the amaNgwane HRH Mzondeni Hlongwane, is emphatic that he and his subjects are not Zulu. At the time of Shaka they were already a functioning clan group.

positions of cultural interface and the manner in which local trade was likely to be affected in terms of supply and demand, and the items traded.

Relatively slowly changing traditions are characteristic of the Zulu, and the transfer of formulaic building constructions from mother to daughter has perhaps allowed for the study of the above architectures to be established with authority, leading to their empirical documentation. Apart from instances such as hybrid architectures, there is little evidence of evolution of these strongly embedded, handed-down 'traditional' architectures beyond form and material. This phenomenon perhaps explains in part why the customers of the trading stores assimilated few elements of the orthogonal traditions of the traders. That there was capacity for change within a strongly prescribed paradigm became evident in research conducted on a variant group of Zulu people in Msinga who decorate their homes, an anomaly in a district which is passionately traditionalist but at the same time has had a century of acculturation due to migrant labour. It emerged that the movement from 'traditional' thatched domes common to the area, to cone-on-cylinders or *rondawels*, had occurred gradually from the early 1970s as a result of scarcity of thatching grass. In addition, intense faction fighting characteristic of the last three decades often resulted in arson. Even though most homesteads were small, the Central Cattle Pattern as alluded to by Evers (1988) still featured strongly in the layouts: entry from below, the relationship of the main dwelling unit relative to those of wives and their kitchens, and a central cattle byre, all continued in a landscape which was so steep that it had to be terraced. These homesteads adhered strongly to some traditional principles of layout and construction, but were simultaneously prepared to drastically change the built form. Despite a century of migrant labour in the cities, few people had adopted western styles of construction in any form (Whelan 2001).

When discussing settler vernaculars, the lines become blurred: Paul Oliver's early publications (1969, 1971, 1975) studied vernacular buildings in their indigenous forms, but with the publication of *Dunroamin': the suburban semi-and its enemies* (1981), the vernacular discourse was taken away from the primitive and became firmly lodged in the familiar. The standpoint that vernacular is not simply 'indigenous' was further reinforced by an edited set of

volumes, the *Encyclopedia of Vernacular Architecture of the world* (1997), which documents architectures characteristic of indigenous peoples as well as recognizing settler buildings as a substantive part of the vernacular.

This apparent contradiction is teased apart by Lindsay Asquith and Marcel Vellinga who suggest that two separate lines of thought exist, one which focuses on a western tradition situated in history, and simultaneously another which is contemporary and non-western (Asquith & Vellinga 2006:4). In erecting the first store buildings, many early traders would have necessarily filled a grey area between these trends, in which inherited European planning traditions and cultural sensibilities are accommodated in structures constructed out of locally available materials and most probably built for them by local people.

Southern African vernacular architecture has mixed traditions derived from its Dutch, German, Indian or English settlers. These buildings exist in tandem with the structures of indigenous people. Primarily settler-generated, early trading stores are firmly rooted structurally and aesthetically in the Victorian building traditions prevailing at the time, which dictated the construction of orthogonal buildings comprising a number of discrete internal spaces. Preference was given to the formal and prestige materials of the European tradition, even though settler buildings were constructed of any available material. In these instances, material translation of European building traditions into local technologies of reeds, wattle-and-daub, mud-brick or stone would contain windows and doors, anomalies for local people. Instead of using conical thatch roofs, hips would be employed which would be thatched using local methods. Conversely, African vernacular architectures rely on a structural tradition generally dependent on the limits of material, and a simultaneously embedded cultural, spatial and aesthetic framework. These constraints dictated the provision, in the African case, of separate units for separate functions accommodating familial hierarchies, rather than the typically settler combination of rooms in a central building. In early trading stores, a hybrid developed between the two traditions.

Many buildings were expeditious, since the interval between the arrival of the trader on the store site and commencement of trade had to be as short as possible. Prefabricated and pre-designed wood-and-iron buildings were often chosen and ordered by catalogue, then delivered and erected on site.

Oliver's definition above identifies vernacular architecture as contrasted with 'designed' architecture. It does not embrace buildings which are intrinsically vernacular but which are ultimately designed, such as prefabricated structures. Despite this anomaly these wood-and-iron buildings are included in the *Encyclopedia* (1997). Contributor Don Watson describes the 'Queensland house' as inherently Australian. Many were prefabricated in order to facilitate removal to other mining towns. 'Dwellings were often prefabricated, initially for unsettled and remote locations, but for the whole state in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century' (Oliver v2 1997:1080-11). Miles Lewis supports this, stating that 'Building in corrugated iron has achieved a vernacular character in Australia notwithstanding the fact that the material is a manufactured one, and until well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century was totally imported'(Oliver v1 1997:268).

The veranda is a dominant and enduring component of the trading stores, and is redeployed in *spaza* shops, but is conspicuously absent in most contemporary indigenous dwellings. Ronald Lewcock addressed the veranda in detail, tracing its origins and employing the term 'veranda house' as a settler-derived vernacular. Tracing the origins of the veranda to Papworth and the Cottage Ornè (1812), Lewcock reinforced its application as a transitional space between house and garden during the Regency period (Lewcock 1965:121). He concluded by situating the veranda firmly as;

..an integral part of the South African scene that it today would be inconceivable for us to imagine nineteenth century architecture without it. On the farms it gave rise to the typical post-Trek farmhouse, encircled (or at least fronted and backed) by low lean-to roofs; in the towns it blossomed forth in tier upon tier of colonnades and lace-like tracery. (Lewcock 1965:130)

Brian Kearney approached Natal settler architecture from first principles (Kearney 1973). Using urban architecture in the settlements of Durban and Pietermaritzburg as examples, he developed the discourse of the 'Natal veranda' and traced the roots of Victorian settler architecture, describing

evolution and gentrification with changing times and economies. Kearney's discussion dovetails with Dennis Radford's micro-study of the 'Maritzburg Cottage' (1997), which traced specific elements of the vernacular building tradition. This interface allowed for inter-textual links with the Marsh Catalogue, an early 20<sup>th</sup> century wood-and-iron directory.<sup>11</sup> Where Kearney addressed settlement on a broader scale, telling a colonial story through the development of both domestic and public buildings, Radford (1997) scrutinized the modest and usually overlooked 'cottage' in detail, analyzing planning, embellishment and architectural applications in terms of the prevailing cultural history.

Although frontier and identity is discussed later in this section, the architecture of frontier settlement has reference since these traders were operating on what was for them, a frontier. Ronald Lewcock refers to Dutch and British architecture in the Cape and the way this informed settler buildings on the Cape Eastern Frontier. He describes these colonial architectures as being restrained by circumstance: lack of expertise, little understanding of environment, and problems with labour created these challenges so that;

The peculiar character of early nineteenth century architecture lay not alone in interacting building traditions and styles, but in the disparity between intention and realization. The details of fashion become transformed into something simpler and restrained styles as (he) notes 'ennobling the architecture where it might have been debased. (Lewcock 1965:420)

Their applications in Natal a century later would have been no different. Whilst Lewcock's description is appropriate, it does not explain the changing architectures sufficiently in order to analyze the store in a manner which informs social relations or identity. Margot Winer addressed such connections in her examination of settler architectures on the Cape Eastern Frontier (Winer 2001). In searching for indications of identity formation, she builds on earlier categories of settler architecture posited by Lewcock (Lewcock 1965), creating a series of divisions in which the architecture illustrates the extant social condition.

Winer thus uses domestic architecture to describe buildings, frontier and identity formation on the Cape Eastern Frontier. She portrays them, itemizing choice of material in which wealth is displayed through the incorporation of imported

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<sup>11</sup> See 'The trading store building as an extension of community space' in Chapter 5.

materials, and the meaningless adoption and adaptation of the Georgian house.<sup>12</sup> She identifies that there was a distinct need to create social divisions based on wealth, which she interpreted as a desire to create a settler identity and an innate Englishness on the remote frontier (Winer 2001:263). In addition, she suggests that settlers used buildings to create a voice for themselves as perceived marginalized people, asserting their identity as opposed to the indigenous inhabitants and the Boers, whereby they used the material culture to 'talk down' to local people and create social distance. Trading stores in Zululand could well have followed this trend, employing imported prestige materials for construction, like brick, when they expanded their trading premises into one subscribing to what Winer terms an 'Architecture of Affluence'.

Given that her field of study pre-dated settlement in Zululand by a century, the initial trading stores in Zululand constructed between 1880 and 1925 fall between what Winer terms the 'Architecture of Coping' in which she groups 'huts and other small, early impermanent housing solutions after the first land grants', and the 'Architecture of Identity' which were permanent structures that were constructed out of 'proper' materials and in a familiar aesthetic format (Winer 2001:261). She notes that, on the Cape Eastern Frontier, a fusion of extant Dutch settler architecture and English 'folk' traditions occurred together with an adaptation of the local indigenous tool-kit (Ibid:262).

Winer's 'Architecture of Identity' came later in Natal. It dominated much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in which aspirant traders altered, demolished and incorporated the vestiges of the former store structures to gentrify themselves in accordance with the expectations of customers, peers and family. In Natal, the 'Architecture of Affluence' is indicated by the Modernist stores. Many traders, particularly those who had been trading for a couple of generations, constructed new buildings even if not legally bound. Geoff Johnson chose to construct a new modern store as he said that 'It had to be done'. Despite a nuance of prosperity, these buildings, and the homesteads that formed part of the complex, remained simple and utilitarian. Altering buildings to subscribe to such laws is explained by noted vernacular architecture scholar Amos Rapoport, who terms them 'rule

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<sup>12</sup> By this stage falling out of vogue in England

systems'. He suggests that social, religious and legal regulations are generators for the construction of vernacular buildings.

Rule systems play a role not only in process characteristics but in product characteristics. Rules are encoded in settings and, if and when understood, act as mnemonics for appropriate behaviour: in that sense they are closely linked to behavioral rules. (Rapoport 2006:194)

Winer concludes the phases of settler architecture by describing a fortified 'Architecture of Fear'. In the Eastern Cape during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century Frontier Wars, fortifications were established against raids by local tribes-people, loopholes put into buildings, and stockades constructed around homes,<sup>13</sup> not dissimilar to the heavily fortified trading posts in North America.<sup>14</sup> Apart from involvement in the short-lived Bambatha Rebellion and the Anglo-Boer War when some northerly traders lost property and stock, little occurred in Zululand to invoke an 'Architecture of Fear'. The 'Architecture of Fear' did not manifest itself in the past as security was not a concern for the Zululand traders. Ironically, the 'Architecture of Fear' exists in the present. The traders today, whether *spaza* shop or store, rely on barricaded space: 'We never had any crime, it wasn't like it is today' is a recurring theme in their tales. Although Dedekind, Johnson, and Cope don't have fortified premises, they are notionally barricaded: Cope has an armed guard and security deployed in the store, Johnson has guards both day and night and Dedekind hires local people to keep watch. Winer reinforces this statement by saying that 'I would argue that this Architecture of Fear is a recurring trope in the South African material world' (Ibid:267). Her broad categories can be applied in a general fashion, but the indicators and generators of the different stages are markedly different in the Zululand context.

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<sup>13</sup>James Walton devoted a chapter of 'Homesteads and Villages' to fortified homesteads on the Cape Eastern Frontier (Walton 1965:61-69). This was revisited by Fisher (1993).

<sup>14</sup>The 'Architecture of Fear' can refer to the trading posts as described by Chittenden (1954). 'In order to ensure the necessary protection the fort was enclosed with a strong wall of wood or adobe, but these were the exception....in some forts there were musketry loopholes along the top of this (constructed) embankment' (Chittenden 1954:45-46). The description continues peppered with words of military flavour: blockhouses, bastions, cannon, artillery.

Although little assimilation occurred between the two distinct vernaculars described above, discussing hybrid architectures is valuable in that it rounds off the discourse describing an independent but concurrent line of architecture.

Hybrid forms have been a prominent emergent vernacular amongst black people in South Africa for some time. They address new fusions of form, and display distinct aesthetics. A comprehensive monograph by Frescura (1989) traces the development of the mono-pitch 'highveld' dwelling, fusing history and anthropology in describing the adoption and transmission of the structure across the country. This building is simple and orthogonal, consisting of one or two rooms with a simple roof-scape. Frescura suggests that this building form, colloquially known as '*iFokona*', '*iFlat*' or '*iPlata*' was appropriated as early as the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and was connected to missionaries in the same way as the *amaKholwa* (missionary converts) constructed houses in a western tradition (Frescura 1989:380). After the 1940s this building tradition was more prevalent. The author lists a number of factors as possible generators for the development of the 'flat'-roofed building, including legislation, availability of stoves and interaction with traders, farmers, and missionaries (Ibid:383). Rodney Harber (2000) discusses a similar building form known as the 'American Flat' or 'Jo'burg Roof', describing it as an orthogonal, incrementally constructed building with architecturally unresolved roof-scapes. Typically, mono-pitch roofs dominate and conflict, openings are simple and the door is usually flanked by two windows. Parapets are common and verandas less so.

The 'American Flat' and the '*iFlat*' are currently constructed vernaculars which owe little to the buildings around them, have little that has been appropriated from other proximal architectures, and have a distinct and dominant cultural aesthetic. Apart from their orthogonal forms and the use of corrugated sheeting, they draw scant architectural information from trading stores, churches or any other European-derived buildings.

Using these texts, the creation of the generic trading store and its hybrid, the *spaza*, can be read as a combination of practicality, aesthetic habit, architectural iconography and rules, together with the imposition of architectural modernism through laws aiming to standardize and control.



- **Nostalgia and bravado**

Winer's example of settlers on the Cape Eastern Frontier constructing Georgian edifices to vocalize their identity did not have much parallel in Zululand. Because comparatively unpretentious structures were built, identity was rather connected to landscape, pioneering and experience than the manner in which traders asserted themselves architecturally.

'We had a good time' is a phrase reiterated by traders still trading, and those who stopped long ago. It tells of *their* pasts, good and difficult times and sits in contrast to the comfortable, affluent lives that some are living today. For many trading is the stuff of memory, so strong that it creates and reinforces their identity. In investigating the Kalk Bay community in the Western Cape, Anna Bohlin says after Tonkin that 'Any account of the past must be understood as being in part a "social portrait", expressing ideas and sentiments concerning identity, morality and cosmology' (Bohlin 2001:274).

The trading store's role as a nostalgic space with a common purpose that served a community is most likely responsible for its evocation. Shaw and Chase note that the intrinsic connection with the past is where 'one had to be connected to the object of scrutiny, perhaps through kinship or through a broader feeling of identity such as class affiliation. 'These were in some way *my* people and my present therefore was bound up in their past' (Shaw & Chase 1989:2). The same can be said for the trading store buildings, which served all manner of people in diverse locations, and for the traders who identified with their buildings, vocations and customers. Nostalgia explains how the institution is remembered. Peter Carrier notes after Nora (1989) that 'A "place of memory" may be loosely defined, therefore, as a cultural support for a particular collective memory' (Carrier 2000:39).

*My own* nostalgia was the impetus for this research. Nostalgia is similarly the vehicle for the traders' presentation of their lives and is that which causes people to remember infinite details of the trading stores without pictographic reference. Shaw and Chase (1989) interrogate imagined history and nostalgia, opening discussion by quoting 'Of all the ways of using history, nostalgia is the most general, looks the most innocent, and is perhaps the most dangerous'

(Shaw & Chase 1989:1). Nostalgia alludes to the romanticization of elements of the past, embraced in a manner which forgets the personal, economic, social and political challenges faced at the time. 'The sick man of Europe had taken to his bed, dreaming of a childhood that he had never had, regressing into a series of fictitious and cloudless infantile summers' (Ibid:1). The authors refer to their 'combatative' rather than challenging manner of engagement as interrogating what they regard as a cultural phenomenon that chooses to represent the present through 'falsification of the past.' They acknowledge feeling challenged by the contributors to their edited volume, finding that nostalgia was something much older, with its roots in medieval times, as well as a large influence on the ethos of Victorian landscapes.<sup>15</sup> The context of their volume is problematic; its publication in 1989 was at the height of nostalgic sentiment in England, in which affluence, the new 'yuppie' culture, and money poured into elements of British culture and 'tradition' led to just criticism of contemporary 'empty' nostalgias and histories (Lowenthal 1989:22). These were constructed through a need for certainty in a period of unease, created by changed times and technologies beyond control. Bender briefly comments. Using the romanticized and dated William Hoskins' writings as a foil, she notes that 'Change in the past is necessary and "good", change in the present is to be feared and rejected' (Bender 1993:29). Dorothea Schultz discussing Jeli singers in Mali says, after Nora (1989), that 'In a situation in which people are both aware of and bemoan a rupture with the past, both collective memory and individual memory are made by creating distant symbols of the past' (Schultz 2007:194).

Richard Terdiman's reference to a 'memory crisis' prior to the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in France, was explained by Michael Rowlands. This;

...was not post-French revolutionary nostalgia but a product of coming to terms with urbanization, industrialization, and demographic expansion. As memory became envisaged as a representation of the past, not its repetition, it became amenable to nostalgic desires provoked by socio-historical change. (Rowlands 1993 2007:130)

The rupture of time and the shift in power in South Africa could have possibly reinforced the focus of the trader's nostalgia and reworked it with a nostalgic bravado juxtaposed to their current lives. Shaw and Chase emphasize the

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<sup>15</sup> This was a pre-Victorian theme, evidenced by Papworth's architectural pattern book (1818) which recreated architectural tropes within romantic landscapes of a past and glorious England.

romantic elements of nostalgia, suggesting that the unpleasant events are ignored (Shaw and Chase 1989:1). However, a critical element of the nostalgic reminiscences of Zululand traders is bravado; the reiteration of discomfort, distance and hardship. This phenomenon is explored in the context of nostalgia.

- **Pioneers and identity formation**

Some traders refer to themselves as pioneers, and many viewed themselves from the outside in their marginal situations. The location of the trading store buildings in such a socio-cultural borderland suggests scrutinizing whether these people were, or were not, 'pioneers' on a 'frontier'. Moreover, did this position contribute to identity formation through participation in what they considered to be 'pioneer' society? Such 'borderlands' for Gupta and Ferguson, are important as sites of identity formation, in that they may not be physically tangible places geographically, but shape identity in providing a grey area for the exiled and the dispossessed (Gupta & Ferguson 1997:48). Whilst the discussion of identity formation is further developed in Chapter 6, it is vital to situate this with discussion of the pioneer/frontier. This is pertinent to the white traders operating in Zululand, since all the traders of the different generations were effectively pioneers, and firmly ensconced in the frontier landscapes of their customers.

The OALD defines 'pioneer' as 'one of the first people to go into a particular area in order to live and work there' (OALD 2005:1101). However, matters are infinitely more complex since the word 'pioneer' has conceptual restraints.

Firstly, the notion of 'pioneer' is couched within the world view of the society that is doing the pioneering. Secondly, the physical and mental interaction with the 'frontier', 'the edge of land where people live and have built towns, beyond which the country is wild and unknown, especially in the Western U.S in the 19<sup>th</sup> century' (Ibid:600) is embodied in the very action of pioneering. Similarly, 'frontier' is a perception of the externally imposed frontier-breaker, ignoring those already resident.

Both 'pioneer' and 'frontier' are thus loaded words, contextualized against an 'other' which has usually been resident for some time. Berkhofer relates that

'pioneer' from an American perspective denotes the white penetration of the interior, as well as its reciprocal impact on history and understanding of American culture (Berkhofer 1981:43). He, as well as Lamar and Thompson (1981) situate the promotion of the word with the writings of Frederick Jackson Turner who appropriated the term in the American context in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Turner asserted that the frontier was responsible for the creation of America as it exists in its institutional and cultural form today.<sup>16</sup> This ignored the participation of two different ethnic groups in negotiating and appropriation.

White settlers arrived in Natal which had been settled for some time by people of the Southern Nguni.<sup>17</sup> Trade was the original intention yet, as white immigration expanded, the discourse of pioneering was extended to settlement schemes and imperialistic ends. Yet the value of the early traders from an historical pioneering perspective cannot be overstated, given their contribution to the societies that they catered for. The pioneering event by Zululand traders has parallels in the method of 'soft' colonization employed by the ancient Greeks, surviving in landscapes created and owned by others (Malkin 1987).

This discourse underpins the development and manipulations of a national psyche. William Trüettner discusses the production of art as a nationalizing force in the American context.<sup>18</sup> He describes Bryant Baker's imposing 8.2m tall 'Pioneer Woman'<sup>19</sup> unveiled in 1930: 'The female who strides valiantly forward symbolizes that spirit, bringing to the New World the civilized virtues needed to found a new colony' (Trüettner 1991:87). The irony of 'woman', until recently a marginalized member of society, leading the national imperative, is not restricted to this example. Elsabe Brink refers to the constructed images at 'Die Vrouemonument' at Bloemfontein, designed by sculptor Anton van Wouw and architect Frans Soff, as 'man-made women'. She recognizes that the 'glorification of Afrikaner women symbolized by the Vrouemonument'<sup>20</sup> served

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<sup>16</sup> This paper, critically contended over the years, was published in The Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1893 pp199-207 (Lamar & Thompson 1981:4).

<sup>17</sup> Similarly, Shaka's general, Sotobe, who was sent to visit King George in England (but only got as far as Port Elizabeth), was a pioneer and broke what were for him, frontiers.

<sup>18</sup> New World and antipodean sources generally have useful parallels with Southern Africa, offering comparative studies in all aspects of settlement.

<sup>19</sup> National Museum of Art/Smithsonian Institution.

<sup>20</sup> A monument erected to the Afrikaner women in 1913, highlighting the depredations of the Anglo-Boer War and the atrocities committed by the British in the Boer Concentration camps. <http://www.mieliestronk.com/vrouemon.html>

an overt political purpose' (Brink 1990). Isaiah Bowman lauded the participation of women in the America of the 1930s saying that:

Nowadays, and to an increasing extent, women are responsible for the flow of culture into the pioneering lands of the world; that is the case at least with white women and lands held by English speaking sovereignties. (Bowman 1931:11)

The use of the discourse in the formation of national identity was firmly grasped by the Afrikaners, using the pioneering spirit of the 'Great Trek' (1838) in order to create nationalism. From 1918 this was exacerbated by the schism created by the Union of South Africa's participation in what was seen as England's war – 'they revived Dutch racial pride and promoted a peasant culture outside the rich English heritage' (Thompson 1999:30). Another construct of national psyche involving white settlement in South Africa comes from the New World.

Historians investigating the expansionist impulse of those years (1840-1890), have suggested that Americans' view of themselves is much indebted to that impulse – that which has often been proposed as a national character is, in fact, an amalgam of traits assigned to the men and women who accomplished the seemingly impossible task of settling the West in half a century. (Trüettner 1991:28)

Trüettner continues, stating flippantly that contemporary Americans view this as the spirit of the old West which 'forged the nation', achieved through sheer hard work, subjugation of indigenous people, exploitation of existing resources and other people's land, and material evidence of progress and achievement.

The United States of America holds the pioneer/frontier discourse dear, as the dictionary definition quoted above illustrates. By the 1930s the idea of 'pioneer' in America had changed little, with the romance and nostalgia of taming the 'Wild West' perpetuating, perhaps largely due to the Great Depression. In the opening lines to his first chapter Isaiah Bowman wrote that,

Pioneers are all sorts of people, a cross section of society at an advancing border, but they are principally young folks with children. Those that succeed are strong and hopeful and confident, willing to buy their dreams with hard labour. (Bowman 1931:5)<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> He specifies that this 'pioneer' is an agriculturalist, viewing traders and hunters as itinerants.

In a work strongly reminiscent of the glowing propaganda characteristic of the masterminds of the 1850s Immigration Schemes in Natal, Bowman employs elaborate language in lauding the early settlers. One pertinent phrase stands out. 'If the border appeals to a man it is because there is a border in his own mind' (Ibid:5).<sup>22</sup> The challenge of relocating to an unknown and strange environment in the 1930s was considered to be less open-minded compared with pioneers a century earlier (Ibid:12-13).<sup>23</sup> More abstractly, whilst they acknowledge Jack D Forbes' definition of a frontier consisting of 'inter-group situations', Lamar and Thompson contest his interpretation of the situation as

...continuing to exist so long as there are ethnic differences between indigenous and immigrant communities, or between successive immigrant communities, long beyond the time when, in our perspective, the zone has ceased to be a frontier. (Lamar & Thompson 1981:5)

They suggest, given the baggage that the word 'frontier' carries:

...We regard a frontier not as a boundary or line, but as a territory or zone of interpenetration between two previously distinct societies. Usually one of the societies is indigenous to the region, or at least has occupied it for many generations; the other is intrusive. The frontier 'opens' in a given zone when the first representatives of the intrusive society arrive; it closes when a single political authority has established hegemony over the zone. (Ibid:7)

This is then defined discretely as 'territory, culturally distinct ethnicities and the process of integration' (Ibid:8). Timothy Keegan (1996) engages with the idea of frontier in detail in his introduction to *Colonial South Africa and the origins of the racial order* in which he places the historiography of the South African frontier in the conventional context. He says that 'isolation was the essence of the frontier experience', which involved all forms of control from access to markets, to government and authority. Leaning on Martin Legassick, the frontier represented the interface between settlers and blacks. The

...imagery of the frontier resurgent, sweeping back triumphantly through the reunited South Africa of the twentieth century, obliterating the liberal transformation of the British Cape in the name of a triumphant Afrikaner nationalism. (Keegan 1996:2)

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<sup>22</sup> Importantly, he tends to use the word 'border' as opposed to frontier in many instances.

<sup>23</sup> Note that this work is internationally situated against the Great Depression.

is testimony to the hegemony of the historians, as the 20<sup>th</sup> century historian William Macmillan described it (Macmillan 1930). Margot Winer reinforces this, emphasizing the manner in which past images assist in creating present realities. She suggests that in a 'politically compromised society', pioneering mythologies similar to the *Anaganon* type histories suggested by Bloch (Bloch 1998:108) are constructed in the justification of settlement being the 'achievement and cohesion at having carved a 'civilized' place'. She concludes saying that 'the ways in which South Africa's past is written, or rewritten, have profound implications for the politics of the present' (Winer 2001:268).

As noted in the previous section, Winer employs architecture as diagnostic material to indicate changing relationships on the Cape Eastern Frontier, and interprets this to illustrate the creation and development of settler identity. She thus engages with the definition and contestation of frontier, citing Legassick (Legassick 1980), Elphick and Gilliomee (1989), and Keegan (1996) as well as the comparative work of Lamar and Thompson (1981) (Winer 2001:257). From this she reiterates the notion that the frontier was not one that was 'rigid and impermeable', supporting the idea of the 'opening' and 'closing' of the frontier defined by Lamar and Thompson (Ibid :258). Thus the appropriate variables in the idea of the pioneer in the frontier suggest that traders in Zululand operated on a 'soft' frontier which 'opened' and 'closed'.

Relations between authority and settler on the frontier are discussed by Susan Newton-King. In her cogent volume *Masters and Servants on the Cape Eastern Frontier 1760-1893* (1999) she suggests that relationships between these pioneers and authority were not egalitarian, and that there was little choice. For instance, the single market at Cape Town was restricted to settlers, thus ensuring that the early Cape settlers who penetrated the eastern 'frontier' were pawns of their rulers. This was a notion which became evident to a degree in the lives of the traders in Natal and Zululand, experiencing the exploitation that existed in a series of cascading levels. In addition, Newton-King grapples with the idea of a malleable and mobile frontier. She considers earlier writings on the subject, such as those of Shula Marks (1980), Hermann Gilliomee (Elphick & Gillomee 1989) and Martin Legassick (Marks 1980), the latter suggesting that:

Whereas the frontier was previously seen as a place of extremes, characterized by racial polarization and rigid class divisions, this description better fits the slaveholding regions of the western Cape, and that the frontier was rather a place of blurred outlines and overlapping categories where enemies and friends were not (or not exclusively) defined by race. These ideas were skillfully elaborated by Gilliom who incorporated them in his notion of an 'open' and a 'closing' frontier where class and racial categories initially displayed a degree of flexibility, but became more rigid as the settler population increased and Europeans began to achieve political and military hegemony. (Newton-King 1999:9)

In a region and period in which the Khoisan were the prominent cultural group, Newton-King felt that Legassick's argument needed 'modification', inferring the existence of a more obvious antagonism between European 'master' and Khoisan 'servant' than Marks *et al* allowed for. This cultural reference highlights regional differences in South Africa, but has little relevance to Zululand traders.

The language of the frontier of Dutch penetration in the Cape is reminiscent of its contemporary, the settlement of the fur-traders in the United States, described by Chittenden (1954). They moved from fort to fort with relations defensive rather than balanced. In early Natal a different situation existed, in which the disruption caused by the *Mfecane*<sup>24</sup> had left a largely subdued and exhausted society and this passivity, together with early Natal traders being allowed to deal only with King Shaka, meant that this trade was sanctioned by the king. With settlement too, the single point of authoritative control for land as far south as the Umzimkhulu River was the Zulu king, which made this transition easier. The idea of a balanced relationship was suggested by Legassick (1980) referring to the Xhosa, perhaps for similar reasons.

John Demos (1995) addresses the social interface by discussing women working in the American fur trade, establishing that involvement in commerce necessarily led to cultural and personal compromise. He speaks of the regulation and control of trade and trade routes by different governments, and then eventually 'Throughout this long sequence, the fur trade drew Indians and Euro-Americans closer together'. Wherever the trade was centered there developed a kind of middle ground, a region in which cultures met, customs

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<sup>24</sup> *Mfecane* refers to the massive social disruptions in Natal from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century until after the 1840's. One cannot embark on any contextual studies of sub-Saharan Africa without referring to some degree to this event, the effects of which affected settlement in Zululand.



came into contact, and life styles merged and blended one into another. Indians adopted certain 'white ways (clothes for example, and food and weaponry), while whites for their part, adjusted to the ways of the natives' (Demos 1995:61). Zululand traders and their customers occupied a similar middle-ground, with varying degrees of integration and assimilation. Demos is more concerned with the duties which Indian women performed; sexual favours for the traders, the provision of appropriate shoes, food production, cleaning and dressing furs, cooks, paddlers, porters and diplomatic agents. Some became wives of traders, as Demos notes of an Indian woman moving resolutely into a trader's house; he 'made her his "country wife" and fathered several children by her' (Demos 1995:68). Parallels can be drawn here with John Dunn, the Zululand trader, who had 49 Zulu wives.<sup>25</sup> Demos stresses the changes that the trading interface made to people's lives, noting that the balance of task allocation that existed in traditional societies changed. With more stress placed on trade, Native American men, traditionally the hunters became more prominent than their women. This upset the gender role balance, which he then notes as a feature of trade-focused societies (Ibid:98). Kent Lightfoot described the motivations of the traders in Southern California as being driven by a need for cheap labour, rather than the missionary zeal of 'transform(ing) their values and cultures' (Lightfoot 2006:7). Few parallels exist which describe altered social relations as a result of traders in Zululand. Rather, this was achieved through gradually restrictive legislations.

For many of the 'intruders' who live in these borderland worlds, identity is tightly bound to their perceived 'pioneer' history. Jones and Moss assert that the sense of identity is recognized, and necessary only as a foil in the presentation of difference which makes identity relational (Jones & Moss, cited in Bender 1998:35). An outsider in proximity to a perceived 'other' constructs relational tensions, which may be mitigated depending on choice and individual dynamics.

The idea of 'pioneer' is politicized and romanticized at different times for different ends. One has only to read the modest memoirs written by traders such as Roy Rutherford, to recognize that the spirit that produces the 'pioneer

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<sup>25</sup> Many other early traders such as Henry Francis Fynn, John Cane and Henry Ogle 'took' Zulu wives, often due to the dearth of European women.

as hero' image is generated by people who come from without this society. Participants in the experience were eking out survival and, generally, idiosyncratic enough to be able to enjoy the process. Rutherford (2000) and Cyril Ovens' (1999) memoirs are thick with experience and anecdote. They constantly relate challenge and hardship yet at the same time have eye for detail and event. These memoirs provides alternative voices and texts that can be combined with other anecdotes, but their failing, unlike that of Braatvedt (1949), is that the distance between the occurrences and the inscriptions is sometimes half-a-century, meaning that much is lost in memory.

The changing and malleable personal memory is described by Julian Thomas;

Memory is not the true record of past events but a kind of text which is worked upon in the creation of meaning. Identities are continually crafted and re-crafted out of memory, rather than being fixed by the real course of past events. (Thomas, cited in Bender & Winer 2001:4)

Identity is thus for Thomas contextually legitimated by the reconstitution of memories. Maurice Bloch expands on this, partly as a means to understand how memory and time may be constructed from a variety of different types of remembering. He says simply that we use stories to make sense of the world we live in and that it is the characteristics of these stories that defines and constructs our worlds and how we perceive ourselves in them. He uses time and space specifically, as examining the representations of both the past and the present reveals the parameters of considered experience (Bloch 1998:100).

Bloch stresses that narratives within which people consider themselves as acting are bound to those people, thus questioning their role in the narrative is arrogant, imposing and for him, 'intellectual imperialism' (Ibid:101). Interpretation or presentation of narratives as the primary source material of Zululand traders exists on both personal and group/communal levels. It is not the nature of the memory, nor an interrogation of its source that is important here, but rather that stand-alone memories have their own tales which contribute to the construction of identity and define the lives of the Zululand traders.

- **Landscapes, memory and monument**

Memory continues to play a significant role, as it acts as a common denominator in interpreting historic landscapes and viewing and appreciating monuments, which trading stores in their humble way are. Trading stores occupy landscape, and simultaneously inform it in the creation of the textual writings in the paths that lead to them, and which their existence has generated. Landscape is the greater tangible and intangible element in which these stores sit, and it acts as a connector between memory and monument at the intersection of the physical and the elusive, to allow for anamnestic repository.

The multiplicity of landscapes is addressed by Barbara Bender *et al.* in *Stonehenge*, which facilitated both archaeological and contemporary voices (Bender 1998). The manner in which she interrogates the multiple discourses surrounding Stonehenge contributes to understanding some of the issues of mark, respect and monument, and her use of a phenomenological approach bolstered with archaeological evidence allows for layers of land and monument.

Bender reduces Stonehenge to the elements of landscape. She employs the writings of WG Hoskins (1963), a contentious author whose landscape theories have been appropriated by heritage professionals in the substantiation of an 'old' England.<sup>26</sup> Bender uses these texts as a baseline and conservative 'control', pitting them against Raymond Williams's (1985) rigorous, but in hindsight somewhat exclusionary, investigations. This inter-textual methodology assists in understanding Stonehenge within its multiple landscapes and formulates her 'experiment'. She favours Williams' interrogation of the layered English landscape through text, and notes his nostalgic focus on the need to create a 'golden age', always located in the past (Bender 1998:26). Williams's 'Structure of feeling', she says,

..works at the intersection between people's interests, actions and perceptions and historically given structures and institutions. He allows us to understand how relative and changing landscape is; how, at any given moment, landscapes even as experienced by a single person are multiple and contradictory: how they may work on different scales: and how they are reconstituted and re-appropriated over and over again. (Ibid:34)

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<sup>26</sup> His assertions are used as a reference point for architectural/ cultural conservation without recognizing the mutating nature of landscapes and their interpretation in palimpsests by society.

This web of ideas is then situated within the complicity of the landscape.

A landscape is the most solid appearance in which a history can declare itself. It is not background, nor is it stage... There it is, the past in the present, constantly changing and renewing itself as the present rewrites the past. (Inglis 1998:26)

Whereas Inglis appreciates the materiality of the landscape, Williams focuses on the variant social perceptions. Bender challenges this lack of engagement with the physical which has value and effect on people and society.

Many works discussing the anthropology of space and place are focused on the relationship between individuals and their dwelling. It must be remembered that this research differs as it is dealing with a specific building type, and collected memories and relationships of a vast cross-section of people, thus the relevance of this literature is limited. However, Roxana Waterson's comparative study of different Indonesian villages and housing structures provides an insight into how space is arranged and appropriated in order to fulfill a variety of social, religious and political functions. Whilst much of her study on the house has limited relevance to a space which is more communally 'owned' and circumscribed, as in the trading store, her work does offer useful analogies of the constitution of animate power through ritual, and the vitalization of the building through its construction (Waterson 1991:122). Joëlle Bahloul describes an 'ethnographic excavation' in returning to her home and scrutinizing the layers that comprise the history of the house and its occupants. She further interrogates how memory is used and narratives re-constituted in the construction of what she terms 'genealogical memory', monumentalizing structures in the minds of their residents (Bahloul 1996:1).

Trading stores act superficially as monuments occupying physical and determined space in their monolithic forms, and at the centre of converging paths. A monument is defined as, 'A building that has special historical importance' (OALD:951). Michael Rowlands and Christopher Tilley view monuments as 'fixing history' (Rowlands & Tilley 2006:500).

They provide stability and a degree of permanence through the collective remembering of an event, person or sacrifice around which public rites can be organized...monuments exist in order to make us believe in the permanence of identity (Rowlands & Tilley 2006:500).

The authors note that monuments have an embodied power in their permanence, being able to invoke emotion and feeling through their tangibility and recognition (Ibid). However, should interpretation be personal and individual, and the monument not be imposed or constructed by a specific group representing an ideology, then its position becomes fluid and can be interpreted from a variety of points of view and at the same time contain the embodied power to invoke emotion. This is the crux of the trading store, which acts as a monument to a series of ethereal memories and relationships.

The trading stores are situated in a landscape that has been historically and contemporaneously contested, marginal in the physical separation across rivers which set up the 'other', separating the Zulus in 'Zululand' and white 'Natal'. Defining boundaries is concurrently permeable, flexible and inflexible in terms of people occupying land and moving across land.

Such ruptures in South Africa's past and new interpretations are facilitated by understanding the work of Pierre Nora. Peter Carrier discusses his assemblage of pluralist approaches to memory located in practices, symbols, items and places. Whilst he refers to Nora's actual work as a monument in itself, Carrier concludes that 'places of memory act as instrumental vehicles for collective memories underpinning social cohesion' (Carrier 2000:38-40). This suggests composite, co-existing memories which do not embed or support minority nationalisms. He contests that these places of memory are 'artificial props' for a disemboweled and 'lost national memory' and as Nora notes, 'There are *Lieux de mémoire*, sites of memory, because there are no longer *Milieux de mémoire*, environments of memory' (Nora 1989:7, 1984b:xvii in Carrier 2000:41). This means that 'places of memory' are not sites onto which people pin their identities, but rather points of interrogation as to how their memories are constructed (Ibid:48).

These individual memories or ways of creating memory are subject to a greater social interpretation by Paul Connerton. In *How Societies Remember*, he noted that in the case of social/ collective memory

..images of the past commonly legitimate the present social order. It is an implicit rule that participants in any social order must presuppose a shared memory. To the extent that their memories of a society's past diverge, to that extent its members can share neither experiences nor assumptions. (Connerton 1991:3)

In the collective sense Bloch too maintains that this has unifying creativity in that 'the phenomenological maintenance or otherwise of past states is, in real circumstances, largely determined by history and people's view of themselves in history' (Bloch 1998:69). He is critical of singular interpretations of group practice, finding it 'totally unacceptable' that the examination of narratives reveals a generalized concept of the mechanisms of the functioning of other people's worlds (Ibid:102).

James Young prefers to use the term 'collected memories', and 'memorials' instead of 'monuments' (Young 1993:xi). He suggests that memorials are focused points which are experienced by a specific group, whereas monuments are more politically loaded. He posits that 'collected' memories are those individual memories focused around memorial spaces, and notes 'A society's memory...might be regarded as an aggregate collection of its members' many, often competing memories' (Ibid:xi). Investigating mostly Holocaust memorial sites, his collected memories are those experienced by a discrete group of people through participation vicariously or directly in a specific event or events.

The connection with memory would explain the architectural continuity of the trading store in the form of the *spaza* shops. In a chapter entitled 'Appropriating the Past' Barbara Bender states:

People use the past as part of the way in which they create a sense of identity or identities, and they create links through myth and legend with established places in the landscape. They may use the past to legitimate the present or to mask change by stressing continuity. (Bender 1998:67)

She reinforces this statement discussing Neolithic burial practices that imposed a layered series of new actions upon previous activity which had been carried out on and within the landscape in the past (Ibid :67). Similarly Ferdinand De Jong describes how colonial memorials with completely different intentions can be reconfigured, assisting in constructing a new common identity. He records the relocated statue of Demba and Dupont in Dakar saying that 'An emblem of African servitude to the French Empire was turned into one commemorating African sacrifice for the liberation of Europe' (De Jong 2008:208). Furthermore, Paul Basu suggests rather, that 'new elements map onto older forces ground in regional history and culture, and do so on the same terrain, so that modernity reinforces their magic and potentiality' (Basu after Ferme [2001] 2007:234).

The material cultural aspect of these trading stores and their iconic position, leads to the question of declaration and recognition of formal monuments, and the part that these play in a provincial and national context.

Brutal interrogation of the emergence of 'heritage' as a discrete industry<sup>27</sup> in the last few decades is presented by David Lowenthal. Particularly in *The Past is a Foreign Country* (1985) he situates the growth of heritage, critically examining it against a backdrop of nostalgia. In *The Imagined Past*, (1989) Shaw is more aggressively critical, viewing the resurgence in nostalgia in the 1980s as a response to the Thatcherite government, perceiving it as right-wing and referring to it as being 'false'. He counterbalances this with the assertion that left-wing nostalgia exists, presenting memories and stories of 'grand battles' against suppression, but ones which connote community and solidarity. Lowenthal contends of the 'folk memories that underpin Labourite nostalgia, that they are as enduring as the elite resonances of the stately home' (Shaw in Shaw and Chase 1989:24-28). Many other authors are critical.<sup>28</sup> Discourse considering the western heritage industry in developed nations is relevant, since Natal was largely a product of a British tradition. However, due to a separate history with different parameters, a more regionalist scrutiny is appropriate. A new country, which is what South Africa essentially is, needs to define its identity. David Hart and Sarah Winter note:

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<sup>27</sup> For discussion on Heritage as 'industry' see Butler 2006:468

<sup>28</sup> Bender 1998, Hewison 1987, Horne 1984, Butler 2006, Lowenthal 2006, Harvey 1992, Contributors to discussion in Ingold (1996:199-247).

In view of South Africa's history of cultural oppression and the complex nature of its society, there is a lack of consensus as to what constitutes a South African identity or nation. Therefore, as expressions of a new South African identity, the challenge lies in the ability of our new National Monuments to express what Tomaselli and Mpofu (1997) term 'South Africa's creative tensions.' These tensions refer to the 'fine dialectic' between individual and collective, conflicting and common identities [Tomaselli & Mpofu 1997:73]. (Hart & Winter 2001:88)

Tomaselli and Mpofu discuss the recreation of South African heritage three years after the 1994 elections, itemizing areas of redress whilst expressing the hope that there will be a considered approach to the reassessment of monuments by the new government. They noted that, at the time,

...broad patterns at work in South African society still reflect a bitter contestation as to what constitutes the nation. They continue to describe a need for sensitivity in the balance between 'preservation and change, individual identities and collective destiny' and 'difference and core commonality'. (Tomaselli & Mpofu 1997:73)

The history of preservation in South Africa is a century old. The National Monuments Council began with the Bushman Relics Protection Act No 22 of 1911, intended to preserve stone-age artifacts and Bushman paintings. This was a national Act of Parliament, and one of the first of the new Union Government. This was followed by the Natural and Historical Monuments Act No. 6 of 1923, amended many times until 1999 when the National Heritage Resources Act No 25 of 1999, an Act of the new democratic government, was promulgated. This legislated for the formation of the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA). It was based on some of the most liberal heritage legislation globally, and drew heavily on the KwaZulu-Natal (Provincial) Heritage Act No 10 of 1997, promulgated some two years earlier.<sup>29</sup>

This legacy suggests the importance of heritage in the past in South Africa, in which the original mandate of the protection of 'Bushman Relics' was expanded to allow for the protection of monuments and sites which were largely structures of settler origin, whether English, Dutch or Portuguese. It is acknowledged that the bulk of the sites proclaimed under these legislations celebrated white settler origins and their history, and were used in part in the creation of national

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<sup>29</sup> This latter has been superseded by the KwaZulu-Natal Heritage Act No. 4 of 2008.



identities,<sup>30</sup> political hegemony and the justification of apartheid. 'History' was regarded as beginning in 1652 with Jan Van Riebeeck's arrival at the Cape.

Fifteen years after the democratic elections, the interpretation of heritage is still being negotiated. Now the bulk of proclamations favour the agendas of the ruling party, and the hopes of a mutually negotiated heritage described by Tomaselli *et al* (1997) have not been realized. This issue is partly addressed by Lynn Meskell and Collette Scheermeyer who refer to the binary of history in South Africa suggesting that 'for some it is seen as a vast reservoir of trauma and loss, while for others it can be mobilized as a source of pride and redemption' (Meskell & Scheermeyer 2008:154).

These authors introduce their paper *Heritage as therapy* with a diatribe regarding the marginalization of African people in previous legislations generally, and more particularly by not allowing for intangible heritage (Meskell & Scheermeyer 2008:157). I agree with these statements insofar as the marginalization of African people through heritage legislation is concerned, but not with the exclusion of intangible heritage as a discourse within living heritage. Intangible heritage is a recent and controversial agenda item in international heritage circles, given the staunch support of physical memorials and monuments allowed for in the Venice Charter (1964) which until recently was the standard for organizations such as ICOMOS. The Burra Charter<sup>31</sup> was forged by ICOMOS Australia in 1979. It introduced ideas of intangible heritage, which only recently were drafted and adopted internationally. Ironically, in the light of the above comments, South Africa was one of the first countries in the world to promulgate legislation to protect intangible heritage.

Meskell and Scheermeyer focus on the declaration and development of political sites such as Freedom Park in Pretoria. They juxtapose the site of the signing of the Freedom Charter in Kliptown in 1955 with riots in the very square by residents in July 2007 for non-delivery of basic services. After Witz, (2003) they are concerned with 'what counts as history and whose history, and a rewriting of the history of the nation in the service of a rainbow nation narrative' (Meskell & Scheermeyer; 2008:156). Meskell and Scheermeyer continue by saying:

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<sup>30</sup> For discussion on identity creation see Butler 2006:468

<sup>31</sup> The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance.

South Africans are being educated through various cultural productions about what is best remembered and what is best to forget. The very recent past and its horrors can be foregrounded, yet the longer, more complex colonial history of the country and the reasons why apartheid was successfully entrenched in the first instance, have been subsequently downplayed.... (Meskell & Scheermeyer 2008:156)

Ideally, post-apartheid heritage sees archives and museums evolving as privileged spaces in which the sense of loss and disruption can be contemplated, assessed and finally cured. However, heritage disappears in the officially-sanctioned memorialization of these sites, often inappropriately interpreted and redolent of pastiche (De Jong & Rowlands 2007:17).

Together we impute that while cultural heritage is being called upon to reconcile the nation, there are tensions of appropriateness and delivery and an overwhelming emphasis upon the ANC (African National Congress) and the struggle years as opposed to uncovering the necessary social complexities of archaeological, pre-colonial and colonial histories. Moreover, heritage pageantry is often more about national performance rather than social justice and restitution (Meskell & Scheermeyer 2008:156).

This article is a scathing reminder that the purveyors of heritage, despite the original intentions in the early years of democracy, have not learnt from the past. Heritage continues to be manipulated to showcase the predominant regime through 'heritage pageantry' which favours the ideology of the ruling party, and marginalizes the very people that it sought to represent. De Jong and Rowlands acknowledge that hegemonic interpretation of memory is prevalent in post-apartheid South Africa by saying 'literature suggests that popular memory is genuine, whereas state ceremony and monuments are mere spectacles of the State.' They reinforce this statement, concluding that the production of heritage in many post-colonial states is done to justify a contemporary context in which there is little faith or credibility (De Jong & Rowlands 2007:13-14).

The foregoing suggests that the position of trading store buildings as monuments is contested, rather than being merely 'A building that has special historical importance' (OALD:951) or a means of 'fixing history' (Rowlands & Tilley 2006:500). Trading stores reflect a multi-vocality which is not the characteristic of the monument. Rather, following Young, they operate as sites of collected memory (Young 1993:ix).

## **1.2 Methodology**

The initial intention was to consider life within the store itself as a point of departure for examining the social institution that it created, and through the lives and eyes of the white traders to assess the impact that these institutions had on their environment. At this point, participant observation was the obvious data collection method, together with interviews, cataloguing, comparisons and mapping, all of which were tools employed in early fieldwork. Finding many stores closed during these investigations limited the efficacy of these methods, meaning that these lives had to be explored through additional means.

The resultant historical approach suggested that the intended methodology had to change and retrospective assumptions had to be made. From the outset it was appreciated that relationships must have been established between traders and their extended communities for them to have eked out livelihoods in remote areas for so long. I thus sought to establish the extent and nature of these relationships and situated their contexts situated against the backdrop of political, economic and social events in Zululand. This largely ethnographic material had to be understood as anecdote and memory, within the context of its author's world view, contemporary anecdote, and official utterance. Reiterative anecdote indicates identity through connection which leads to the interrogation of the establishment of inheritance. This, in itself, infers a connection between memory and experience, and the creation of identities usually through a 'bloodline', as perceived by the traders themselves

The methodology presented here was retrospectively employed due to the re-situation of the intended contemporary study into one located in memory.

- **Statement of Problem**

This research engages with the idiomatic architectural form of the trading store as described, presents it as an example of vernacular modernism and explains the buildings in the context of their social function. The social fabrics woven through the trading store building are then collected by various means and analyzed, out of necessity interpreting a collection of fragmented memories. Here these stories speak for themselves, as stories, but at the same time

provide a valuable contribution to the social histories of KwaZulu-Natal. They reveal that the life of the Zululand traders and their ascendants and descendents relied on an inherited and inherent paternalism and connection with the people that they served.

Within the working question were a series of other problems that had to be framed and investigated, none of them immediately apparent at the outset. Definition was the first. Early fieldwork revealed that many 'trading stores' in rural areas, identified superficially by their form and advertising, were not trading stores but the new breed of traders, the *spaza* shops. This proliferation of *spaza* shops mimicking the trading store thus raised the questions of 'What were they?' 'How were they different?' 'Or the same?' and 'In what manner did their appropriation of the architectural trading idiom have any meaning?' Thus, the first major hurdle to overcome was to identify what it was that characterized the trading store and to establish why so many of the stores which had traded until recently were closed or operating at a minimal level of trade. In identifying the criteria that defined the historic and contemporary trading store, one could then tease out the social systems it facilitated. This physical structure had to be interpreted as an all-embracing institution from an architectural and a commercial point of view, since the value of the trading store lay in its capacity for providing a wealth of goods and ancillary services which became inextricably associated with the physical structure. The definition of the trading store and its context as a commercial operation is discussed more fully in Chapter 4.

As an anthropologist working 'at home' there was an inherent personal requirement in which it was important that any study had to be relevant to people living in South Africa. It was vital that its dissemination in a variety of forms could contribute positively to nation building and suggest new concepts of identity as these implicated white South Africans, rather than those explicated by law and physical separation. In this manner the stories presented could supplement the narratives which already exist on a regional and international level about race and relations in a colonial and apartheid-run South Africa. This was critical in the choice of study area, and informed the formulation of the research, given a familiarity with the landscape. Brookes and Webb lent support in a dated but illuminating paragraph from their *'History of Natal'* that:

Research needs to be done as to the influence of traders, European and Asian, among the Zulus in stimulating new needs, meeting new desires for greater material comfort, and serving as social centres and agencies for disseminating news. Their share in changing Zulu life has been considerable, and began to operate as far back as Cetswayo's reign. (Brookes & Webb 1965:103)

Nearly five decades later little research has been carried out. The urgency is compounded given that most traders are elderly or deceased and few stores operate as they did in the past, removing the context of active trade.

- **Statement of bias**

I am a seventh generation white South African in my forties and have lived in KwaZulu-Natal<sup>32</sup> for most of my life, in both 'Natal' and 'Zululand'.

The chequered political past of South Africa should form a necessary backdrop to any research, both historical and contemporary. As a native, a degree of implication is acknowledged, yet at the same time this legacy aids in understanding the simple relationships and reciprocities that formed because of racial segregation and, in other instances, despite this practice. Initiated by the British through the Colonial Government and by the Afrikaners through the legislations of apartheid, today separation is manifested in current policies of land reform and Affirmative Action.<sup>33</sup> The political agendas of the past form a necessary backdrop as to why events occurred and how relationships were formed between traders and their customers, as much as the manner in which the political agendas of the present affect the lives of the same. Thus the mutuality of the relationships must be considered in this political context when viewed through the eyes of the traders. As a South African of European descent, I am aware that I am affected by current policy, events and legislation, and I have striven to ensure that I have presented the information which has affected traders' lives in a manner which is reflecting their stories and not mine.

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<sup>32</sup> KwaZulu-Natal is one of nine provinces of democratic South Africa. Prior to 1994 four existed, namely Natal, Transvaal, Cape and Orange Free State. KwaZulu-Natal is an amalgamation of the province of Natal and the adjoining territory of Zululand. It is situated on the eastern seaboard, sharing boundaries with Mozambique, Swaziland and Lesotho which add to its ethnic complexity. It is one of the poorest and most densely populated provinces, falling behind the 'Drakensberg Curtain'- a colloquial flippancy expressing its marginalization from a national perspective evidenced by the attitudes of Native Affairs officials described later in this work.

<sup>33</sup> Affirmative Action is the legislated preferential hiring of previously disadvantaged people to make the workforce more representative of the demographics of the country.

My architectural training specialized in Zulu vernacular structures in Msinga, where Stephen Cope trades today. My original interest in trading stores was thus as objects of material culture, from which the social complexity that was centred around and operated within these structures subsequently emerged. The consequent Venn Diagram of shared spaces as an independent interface between different cultures and ethnic groups succeeded in situating these buildings and their 'owners' as participants in a borderland landscape belonging largely to the realm of the perceived 'other' (Figure 6.3: Chapter 6). How the relationship between traders and customers was negotiated and the parameters of social, commercial and political operation were established, were layers that needed arranging against the physicality of the structure to fully establish the value of the stores as institutions.

Working 'at home' was rewarding. It enabled a deeper excavation of events and contexts which contribute to current society based largely on instinct but also on knowledge of available material. An extant social network did not initially evidence itself as being potentially contributory, but ended up being a valuable source of information creating some complexity in the data. As a resident, the embedded-ness of knowledge about daily operations, how and why things happen, consequences and the connections that exist between politics, economics and infrastructural dynamics was vital in understanding the traders. Ultimately, auto-anthropology was an important component of the methodology.

My home in Pietermaritzburg is distant from Zululand, the study area, thus I am physically removed from the field. However, given that working 'at home' has the benefit of repetitive work, this base allowed for consultation of appropriate archival and legislative sources as needed or as different themes and ideas developed. Pietermaritzburg is relatively central for many retired traders, making further interviews possible. Being part of an extant community proved beneficial; between 2006 and 2010 I delivered a number of lectures on trading to local interest groups. These largely elderly audiences comprising traders and their sons, daughters, nieces and nephews, provided critical peer review.

- **Boundaries and limitations**

The original geographical ambitions altered with the realization that much of the study would be historical. Limiting the boundaries was pragmatic from historical, temporal and geographic perspectives, given the variant histories of Natal and Zululand, those territories which comprise contemporary KwaZulu-Natal. Spatially, Zululand occupies the area north-east of the Tugela and Buffalo Rivers to the south of which was located Natal (see Figure 1.4). It is bounded by the provinces of Gauteng and Mpumalanga to the north and north-west. The countries of Swaziland and Mozambique share the physical barrier of the eastward flowing Usuthu River, and the Indian Ocean is situated to the east.



**Figure 1.4: 19<sup>th</sup> century Natal and Zululand. Natal, unlike Zululand, was open for settlement. These two territories today form the province of KwaZulu-Natal (Excerpt from map of South Africa, 1885: [www: south-africa-tours-and-travel.com](http://www.south-africa-tours-and-travel.com) 05/01/11)**

Focusing on traders operating only in Zululand restricted the study to a territory with an independent past, and truncating the geographical boundary established a temporal limitation, restricted by the history of colonially-settled Zululand. Thus, the period studied commences at the time of the 1905 Zululand Lands Delimitation Commission (ZLDC)<sup>34</sup> and continues until the present.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Land acknowledged as belonging to Zulu people was surveyed and opened for white settlers.

<sup>35</sup> Traders of Asiatic origin were not allowed in Zululand by request of the Zulu people, in terms of the Zululand Lands Delimitation Commission of 1905. Thus, reference to some Indian traders is for general discussion. Until the later years of the 20th century, Indian traders were restricted to the Natal side of the Tugela River. Roy Rutherford speaks often in his memoirs of Goanese in northern Zululand and southern Mozambique. Given the isolation, some had managed to cross the border to trade in South Africa despite the restrictions on Asiatic trade in Zululand. He considered the Goans anomalies; raised in British India and fiercely loyal to the Crown, they spoke fluent Portuguese (Rutherford 2000).

The 'Natal Location' known as Impafana or Msinga (see Map inset page 9) is included in the study area. Msinga acts in many ways as an extension of Zululand, being contiguous with the former.<sup>36</sup> Two young traders in this area, Cope and Dedekind, run stores which have existed for generations. Most of their customers come from Zululand, across the Buffalo and Tugela rivers.

- **Selection of Research groups**

The sheer numbers of people that traded in Zululand would have provided large amounts of disconnected data, creating a layer of general information. It was more important to follow stories and memories in order to scrutinize specific relationships, and how these relationships were perceived and passed on. Realizing that the source of memories is a legacy of time and re-remembering led to conflating the investigative boundaries of the sample group. This resulted in the selection of a small number of trading families with multiple generations, since the complexity of the networks and inheritance of value systems is largely due to birth and operation within the trading system. However, there is still reference to other large trading families and traders who had a short-lived career in Zululand.

Zululand had numerous rural trading stores from the late-19<sup>th</sup> century onwards. Many of these were run by people who were not trading for long; they had limited ambitions, and for a variety of personal reasons were restricted in terms of growing their businesses. Those who traded to the extent in which they became functioning parts of the community were in it 'for better or for worse', given the capricious livelihoods at the time, particularly with famine, drought, locusts and stock disease. They were implicated in local decision-making and politics, and by circumstance, were often tied into the position economically. Their involvement in the community and empathy for its members is a quality inherited by their children. For this reason, the families that spanned generations of storekeeping construct a series of personally related histories which describe social relations reinforcing their commitment to trade.

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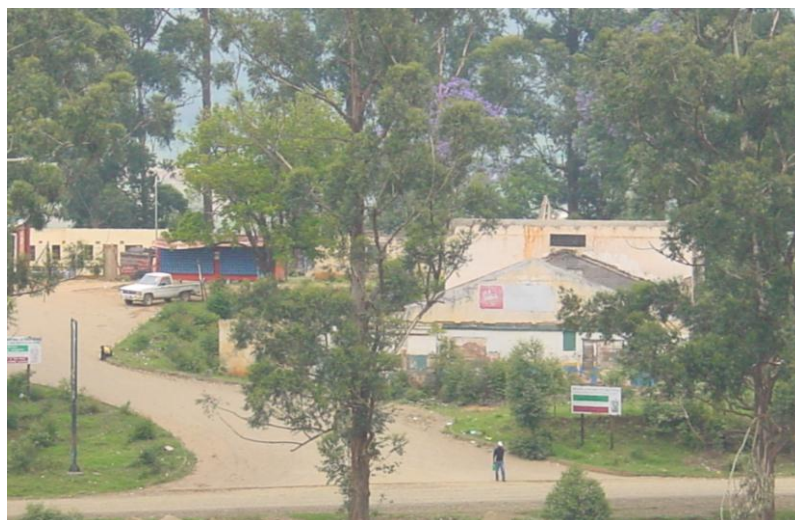
<sup>36</sup> Cyril Ovens discussed these stores in his monograph on Zululand traders (Ovens 1999).



- **Assessment of variables**

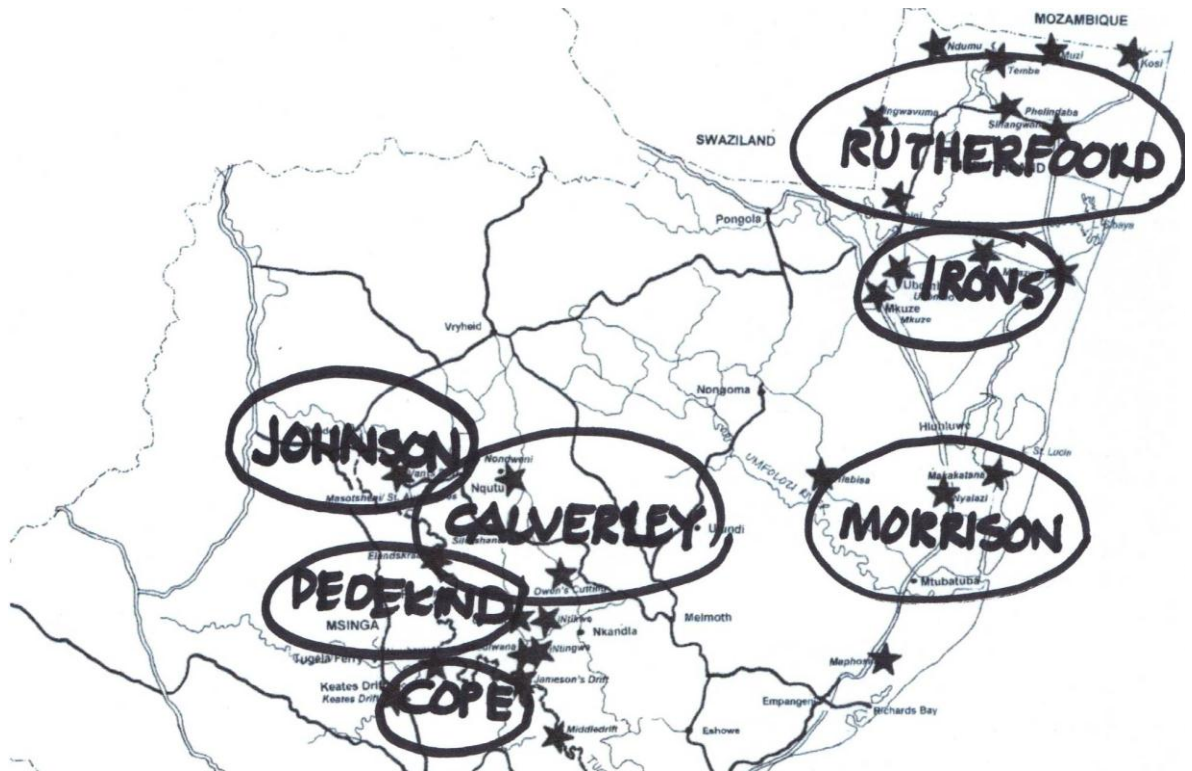
The geographical extent of Zululand is nearly 26000km<sup>2</sup>. Its elevation rises rapidly onto the escarpment creating different biomes. The climatic zones of Tall Grassveld, *acacia* Thornveld, Coastal Dune Forest, the hot Tugela River valley and the sandy Makhathini Flats are occupied by different cultures and traditions. The variant environmental potentialities inform local cultural practices as well as dictate to the traders goods to be sold, cultural groups to be catered for and local operational challenges experienced. Selecting store sites in different areas led to an engagement with a variety of groups, climates and traditions.

The Highveld/Tall Grassveld area of central Zululand is covered like a net by the Calverley family. Their ancestor William Calverley started trading in this area at Sibhudeni in 1890. His daughter-in-law Margaret Sutton took over his stores and continued to trade, operating stores at Masenkomo and iNtikwe. Many memories related by Jean Aadnesgaard and Florence Bateman involve their youth at the iNtikwe Store where they lived with their mother. This trading lineage ran to four generations, but rested largely with the third cohort who ran stores at iNsuze, Masenkomo, iNtikwe, Owens Cutting, Dlolwana and Qudeni. Jean Aadnesgaard's son Michael was shot dead in his store at Masenkomo. In the Tall Grassland biome but closer to the Tugela Valley, Geoff Johnson has been trading at Masotsheni for 55 years. His grandfather, the noted lay cleric Charles Johnson, constructed the mission at St Augustine's close to Masotsheni Store in the 1870s, making Johnson a third generation missionary/farmer/trader.



**Figure 1.5 Dlolwana Store complex (Author 2006)**

These store sites were relatively distant from each other, but were simultaneously closely connected through familial and social relations. They served the communities in the high grasslands where it sometimes snowed, populated by mixed ethnicities and dissociated tribal clusters such as the BaTlokwa, people of Hlubi/ Sotho descent placed in the area by the British as a buffer zone against the Zulu after the 1879 Anglo-Zulu War.



**Figure 1.6: Zones of trading families researched (Diagram: Author 2011)**

The Morrison family traded in the humid coastal dune forest at Nyalazi, Makakatana and Maphosa, catering largely for people living in the State Forests in addition to a more sea-dependent group, a ‘pale-skinned people who came across Brodie’s Crossing to sell buckets of mussels’. The Holmes family traded in this area, and close by at Mtubatuba, the Harrison family owned a number of stores. The elderly Errol Harrison was badly beaten in an attack at their old store, and has recently died. Reference has been made in places to his *Memories of Early Matubatuba (sic) and District* (Harrison 1989).

The Tugela Valley traders ran stores at now abandoned sites such as Jameson’s Drift, Mfongosi, Middledrift, Tugela Ferry and Vants Drift. Across the Tugela River, KwaKopi Store at Keates Drift is still operating, situated between two major tribal groups, the amaZondi, based across the Mooi River in an area called Mpanza, and the Mthembu who reach north into the valleys of Msinga.

People in this area hold traditional values dear and embrace their constant innovation and evolution. Clothing, adornments, ceramics, housing and beadwork have all changed markedly in the last two generations (Whelan 2001). A vital point, literally, for the inclusion of this store at Msinga is that it continues to have a central role in the community. Moreover, Stephen Cope, the youthful nephew of the original trader, has opted to trade in a much altered society from the one in which he grew up. Close by, Heinz Dedekind returned to run the family store at Elandskraal, leaving behind an engineering job in Pretoria. His involvement in the community and their reliance on him is a relationship constructed through five generations of mutual respect.

North of Mkuze on the Makhathini Flats, are the two dozen stores once owned by the Ndumu Group. They were operated by the Rutherford family for seven decades and formed a fundamental part of local economy. The district still benefits as many of these stores are transformed into franchised supermarkets. Running these particular stores demanded careful organization. They were distant from each other, located in sand dune and swamp and had the added challenges of malaria, few medical facilities and no roads. Yet, by providing essential services lacking in the area, the Ndumu Group grew to become a large and successful enterprise. The local customers are largely Tembe people, an offshoot of the southern Tsonga who have different cultural reference points to the Zulu. Local commodities such as palm wine, dried river fish and endemic roots and corms form objects of trade and barter. Tshongwe Store is also here, run by David Irons who traded on the mountain at Ubombo for many years.

The families selected and the people interviewed have ascendants and descendents, as well as a lattice of genealogical relationships across space, forming traceable dynastic structures which embed and transfer the spirit of trading vertically and horizontally. Choice of research participants was based on the willingness and availability of traders to participate, given that most left the area in the late 1970s with the termination of their original store site leases.<sup>37</sup> A keenly felt absence is that of a well-known but cranky trader in Nongoma, who was reluctant to participate due to age and ill health.

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<sup>37</sup>The original Zululand stores were occupied subject to a 99-year lease, conditional on providing accommodation for travelers and not selling liquor and gunpowder to Africans.

### 1.2.1 Methodological Approaches

The methodology is underpinned by an interface of anthropology and history, due to the marginal position occupied by most of these stores in contemporary KwaZulu-Natal. A brief discussion of historical anthropology should preface the other methodological approaches as these all require and rely on information lodged in the historical record.

- **Historical anthropology**

After years of struggling for acceptance, historical anthropology is now considered acceptably mainstream rather than peripheral. This is due in large part to certain protagonists such as Bernard Cohn (1981), Comaroff (1982) and Comaroff and Comaroff (1992), Natalie Davis (1981) and Carlo Ginzburg (1981) who all advocate a contextual interpretation of historical data in order to have a deeper understanding of anthropological and historical systems that existed at that time. Bernard Cohn suggested that;

Until the eighteenth century, anthropology was a part of history. Historians sought to understand otherness in time by postulating a relationship between the past and the present, the past being lineally and causally related to the present. (Cohn 1981:227)

John Comaroff supports this statement by saying that 'In my view, there ought to be no 'relationship' between history and anthropology, since there should have been no division to begin with' (Comaroff 1982:144).

Cohn felt that pure anthropology tended to 'lop' off the historical past. He suggested that most 'field' areas have a strong situation in colonial history and that constructing an ethnographic present without recourse to the waves and changes that such history provided is short-sighted. The past is contextual and fundamental in understanding the present (Cohn 1981:231). In adopting parts of this strategy it is important to note that where Cohn identifies the non-linear time frame of anthropology in 'exotic' locations as being problematic in the coincidence of history and anthropology, in the case of the Zululand traders, linear time-frames borne out of their European heritage create access to like constructs of memory, history and time (Ibid:231).

Examining this disciplinary suture from a primarily historical perspective, Natalie Davis perceives the interpretation of cultural processes and their insertion into historical studies as vital in understanding historical events and social institutions, avoiding a bland, one-dimensional point of view (Davis 1981:270). She supports the appropriate use of anthropology within history to deepen a sense of understanding whilst at the same time taking cognizance of the context of the information. Carlo Ginzburg offers that every history, even if empirical, is a narrative, which is selected at specific points in time (Ginzburg 1981:277-8).

Perhaps as a child of the developing world, John Comaroff is less of the western mould, and can see from the inside out. He has a bolder stance than Cohn's somewhat self-conscious approach to history as being Eurocentric. Interpreting the anthropology of the traders within their greater networks and integrating the historic processes that influenced them and, in part, created them, draws on the technique in which Comaroff combines a *Dialectic of Articulation* and an *Internal Dialectic* to achieve an 'authentic, theoretically principled historical anthropology' (Comaroff 1982:144,146). By itemizing the 'units of analysis' in historical anthropology, a one-dimensional approach as well as a simplistic presentation of interactions, change and transformation is avoided. At the same time, the internal dialectics of the system are studied as well as the manner in which they form part of and situate themselves in the greater context. John Comaroff recognizes that cultural systems do exist as victims of colonial baggage, but that there are internal features within the study group that have created and reinforced this (Comaroff 1982:172). A local example is the adoption of the orthogonal building. Although it may have been externally introduced, its proliferation is as a result of internal cultural dynamics such as accommodating western furniture and being perceived as 'modern'. Thus, the internal dialectic is as important as the study of the greater context.

Employing some of the above techniques, especially investigation from a number of perspectives, was necessary in order to create a 'thick' history which could be used in substantiating and analyzing the ethnography. This process entailed using appropriate research methods to collect and interpret both contemporary and historical data, following the avocation of Comaroff (1982)

and Davis (1981). The result was that an important part of the methodology was managing this interface between the past and present.

It must be noted that the oral histories and stories captured in the interview section described above, form part of this corpus of data which was supplemented with the following methods. Using a fusion of past and present, melding contemporary research and historical anthropology assisted in determining the development and change of the trading stores over time, situating them as changing, evolving and often dying, institutions.

- **Fieldwork**

Fieldwork was carried out between October 2006 and February 2008, with further work being continued later in 2008. Returning to re-interview was necessary. Occasional references to old ordinances and legislations for instance, had to be empirically confirmed and tested against the sample group.

The full extent of the trading store investigations ranges from the far south of KwaZulu-Natal to the far north and then into the centre of Zululand. The initial fieldwork embracing the whole province was contributory as it developed themes of operation which embellished and added gravitas to the stories of the Zululand traders. Most of this early work is excluded from this thesis due to the conflation of the boundaries limiting the research to trading families in Zululand.

- **Research assistants**

Some of the fieldwork, particularly initially, was carried out together with my husband Alan Nixon. Besides being a fluent Zulu linguist Alan worked for the South African Police Service<sup>38</sup> for two decades and, from experience, recognizes the importance of the trading store in KwaZulu-Natal. Often, looking for somebody specific in a rural area, the only direction he may be given is the name of the local store. From there he finds his quarry; the storekeeper knows his customers and if not, there is usually somebody at the store who does.

Alan's assistance was not always beneficial, as is illustrated by a particularly notable moment in early research. Whilst visiting a store in the Umzimkhulu

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<sup>38</sup>The author is cognizant of the reputation that the South African Police had during apartheid.

area in southern KwaZulu-Natal we encountered an African store owner who had purchased six trading stores, most of which had previously belonged to the Cole family who were well-known and prosperous traders in the area. Alan knew this trader from his time as the police Branch Commander in the area. Speaking Zulu, he reintroduced himself. In a particularly archaic conversation using an old intercom linked to the house behind the store, Alan described the extent of this study. When he had finished the owner declared that he was a busy man and that Saturday was not a good time. 'Tell your wife she must call back some other time', he urged, which I did some days later. The store owner's response was that his family had taken a decision when they purchased the stores not to talk to researchers and that he was not interested in talking to me. Being a reasonably educated man himself, and seemingly familiar with the requirements of post-graduate study, this was a strange declaration. One possible explanation is that, as a border area, Umzimkhulu is historically notorious for running guns and *dagga* (marijuana). Consequently police are regarded with high suspicion. A store close by is aptly named 'Gun Drift Store'.

Maureen Ndlela, a Zulu speaker who has been working for me in a number of capacities for the last five years including translation, information collation and administration, assisted with other fieldwork. She is particularly effective as she does not threaten those she interviews; she is a *makothi*, a demure and friendly older woman. In conservative Zulu society, she does not offend other women and simultaneously approaches older men with due respect.

- **Participant observation**

Participant observation was the method of data collection employed at first when the investigation was intended to be firmly located in contemporary times. This technique was valuable in being able to identify the trading store as a specific type of institution characterized by both relationship and goods.

Initially, locating stores was mostly through windscreen survey, in which I would arrive and ask the storekeeper across the barricaded counter for permission to sit and watch or interview people. These stores were generally *spaza* shops, run by employees since the owner lived elsewhere. The offerings behind the counter were generally sparse, the shopkeeper's disconsolate, and alcohol was

their greatest attraction. Repeatedly sitting amongst people consuming their third quart of beer at lunchtime precipitated a re-evaluation as to why these *spazas*, mostly, were not trading stores, and the corollary, what did characterize the trading store? This was the point of realization that the form of the building did not necessarily convey its indicated function of 'trading store', and that the *spaza* shop was a completely different commercial and social enterprise.

Participant observation entailed spending time in the store watching its operations, management and extent of facilities as well as questioning the storekeeper and the customers. To familiarize myself with commodities, I initially itemized what people were buying, how they chose the item and how they were paying. This extended to comparing prices of goods between rural and peri-urban stores, in order to establish the price differences in relation to proximity to towns. Positivist data such as photographing the buildings and GPS'ing the locality was important from a location and documentation point of view. These techniques were employed at the functioning stores at Keates Drift, Elandskraal, Tshongwe and Masotsheni, in addition to many *spaza* shops. Ultimately, much of this data was unusable in its collected form, although it provided general information such as variations in types of consumables stocked, prices in rural stores being higher than in town, and general method of payment. Given the location of this study in history and memory, its value was perhaps greater in collecting information in the contemporary realm firsthand, which could be extrapolated in the historical context.

Participant observation was used for the large itinerant events outside the store. Historically, trading stores were a fixed landmark for Hut Tax collection (see Chapter 2) and pension payouts. Because so few stores still operate in a traditional manner, nowadays very few are directly associated with pension collections which are located at clinics, magistrates courts, municipal offices and post offices. Tshongwe Store on the Makhathini Flats and Keates Drift (KwaKopi)<sup>39</sup> in Msinga both still benefit from the monthly pension round.

Generally, pension day is on a fixed day of the month. The authorities arrive at the store with the pension money and pay people social grants. Fingerprint

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<sup>39</sup> KwaKopi (At Cope) is a Zulu corruption of the trader's name.



identification is used. Since this is a monthly event, people wait for their pensions to buy food and goods, which is often from the trading store. Trading store owners use this round opportunistically, offering specials and bringing in floats with loud music and vendors who dramatically advertise goods.

Interviews at the Keates Drift (KwaKopi) pension day were conducted with Maureen's help. We focused on older people, but found the process chaotic and the information random. People in the pension queues did not remember or were not willing to remember, despite the fact that the information solicited was assumed to be neither controversial nor challenging. However, the *content* of the pension queue itself was more important - many very young girls were collecting social grants. Storekeeper Stephen Cope describes Msinga women as being renowned for their virtue, but suggests that young girls today challenge the cultural stasis and anger their fathers by having children out of wedlock. Not only does this affect the *lobola* bride price but it enables them to collect paltry social grants whereby they gain a measure of independence from their parents. These girls queued together with the elderly such as one Jeremiah who declared that he had a total of 38 children through eight households.

The breadline income chaos of pension day was juxtaposed with a 'gravy train' *imBizo*<sup>40</sup> taking place across the river. Descending into the valley we had been overtaken at speed by scores of luxury vehicles flashing blue lights. Cope pointed to a large marquee across the river, 'It's a Social Welfare *imBizo*' aiming to assist the local people in the valley. Isn't it ironic? Here are all the heavyweights sitting fatly talking about social welfare and all the (electronic) pension payout systems are offline from here to Pomeroy!

Alan assisted in translating the pension day interviews at Tshongwe Store. His then position as a Senior Special Investigator with the Scorpions<sup>41</sup> fulfilled a gate-keeping role, exposing local frustrations around misuse of public funds and high-level corruption in local Municipalities. This reception was in stark contrast with that of the storekeeper at Umzimkhulu as described above.

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<sup>40</sup>Convocation (Doke *et al* 1990: 80)

<sup>41</sup>A high-level anti-fraud and corruption unit enabled and then dismantled by legislation.

- **Interviews**

Dealing in part with historical relationships meant that a great deal of the research had to be situated in the past and was thus subject to people's memory. This entailed collecting oral history from sources that were part of trading family lineages, thus a series of semi-structured interviews with traders mostly retired to more amenable places, form the bulk of this data. The nature of the information required was largely experiential and non-empirical, a series of stories and anecdotes which allowed for the relating of memory. The intention was to establish who these people were, how they thought and where they positioned themselves in relation to local black people as well as other traders and people living in towns. In an attempt to jog minds and establish a baseline of operative information on which to position the memories, a more structured framework was employed posing common questions such as the sourcing of bread, milk and fresh goods, and participation in the doings of the local people.

Over the fieldwork period, a total of 42 storekeepers were interviewed. Some ran going concerns whereas other's businesses had been long closed. Some storekeepers owned a number of stores with managers operating the different businesses. In all, these participants represented a variety of ethnic groups and religions. As noted, the majority of the black-owned stores were *spaza* shops, some situated in old trading stores and some situated in newly-constructed buildings. The grand days of a trading empire for many have been scaled down to a hobby - as Jean Aadnesgaard declares, 'It's difficult to get trading out of the blood'. Locating traders was easy; names and contacts were readily passed along the grapevine as most traders were still marginally in contact, and had the names of old colleagues in their new environments. Since most traders had left trade and had retired to other locations, fixed appointments were generally made. For those still trading, various forces determined the time and manner of interview. Pension day, for example, is generally not a good time to approach anybody in trade as the sheer mass of people moving through the store needs constant monitoring. However, it is an ideal opportunity to observe the operations of customers coming to collect their pensions at or near the store.

Finding a workable interface with customers was particularly difficult. Interviewing people on a random basis as to the stores of their youth,

remembering the name of the storekeeper, and other questions based on memory evoked very little response.<sup>42</sup> Interviews at *spaza* shops and even those customers at the trading store were disappointing. Was it possible that the stores had no meaning for them? Perhaps the traders were blowing their own trumpets? However, the buzz of excitement and huge volumes of goods being purchased on the pension days told different tales. Barbara Bender (after Williams 1985) offers a way of interpreting this silence to understand this phenomenon of in-articulation. Employing Raymond Williams' description of the English landscape using stratified and opposing voices through history, she presents him in a dual light, a 'tensioned identity'. His origins as working-class/Welsh are juxtaposed with an Oxbridge education and subsequent academic pursuits, both facets of which have different responsibilities and perceptions. She suggests that similarly, the British working-class man leads a life determined by survival and routine, and has little time to explain his world or interrogate how it works. Bender pairs this inscrutability with what she terms 'inarticulate understanding', and juxtaposes this with the middle-class/academic, the Oxbridge Williams, who has cognition in terms of abstract knowledge, can view systems from without, and has the leisure to view what for others does not need to be explained. Superimposing this analysis suggests that I view the stores and the landscape through the lens of the latter, whilst the average customer experiences the trading store as an object at face value and not as one that has to be explained (Bender 1998:27).

- **Archival work**

Whilst some may consider the traders living in remote areas as an exotic 'other', they are culturally bound to colonial settler archival material. White traders and their ascendants have a history inextricably tied to the whim of bureaucracy and authority and other events that comprise the formally documented and constructed histories of KwaZulu-Natal. Thus official documents dealing with traders such as legislations, Native Affairs Departments, etc. are required as source material on occasion. These references, in a variety of forms, provide

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<sup>42</sup> My assistant Maureen Ndlela conducted structured interviews with over 100 black people at church, on the taxi and in the taxi queue, as to what they remember about trading stores from their youth. The information from this was largely concentrated on KwaZulu-Natal south of the Tugela River, and thus did not form a practical part of this final report. There was a fine line between contemporary practice and memory.

the governmental voice, and contribute parts to the story which many of the tellers thereof are unaware.

Archival work was needed to empirically substantiate the sometimes vague stories of the traders. In other instances, it provided the spur for other stories, connecting the lives of the traders and their customers to each other and to a greater world. Using such primary source material was vital when the teller could not speak: Jimmy Morrison's pedantically archived letters and documents established a character and connectedness which could not be conveyed orally.

Maps were critical tools in understanding geographical intrigue. Military survey, postal service or infrastructural maps positioned different stores at different times, revealing which stores had value when and to whom. The 1937 Aerial photographs and 'Google Earth' were used to identify the human maps of roads and footpaths etched on the landscape.

Historical and archival work assisted in flagging physical changes. Participants told of rebuilding stores; no-one could remember when or why, but it happened. Consulting the Natal Ordinances revealed Ordinance no 30 of 1947, a Nationalist government imperative which changed the stores materially

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- **Lecture series**

Another technique of assimilating social histories and collecting data from a broader group was the presentation of a series of invited lectures, thus casting out the research to a wider, knowing audience; the general public. An illustrated lecture was presented at the Hilton Arts Festival in September 2007, and talks on trading stores were presented to the Lions River Heritage Society, the Pietermaritzburg Antiques Circle, the Annual General Meeting of the Underberg and Himeville Historical Society, The Midlands Forum as well as the Decorative Arts Societies in Durban and Pietermaritzburg. The mainly elderly members of these fora submitted *their* memories of operating stores and what the stores meant to them, commenting, contributing and ratifying the role of these institutions in their lives, and the wider history of the province. This process performed the function of an important social peer review.

- **Analytical process**

A number of pre-existing conditions were taken as given in the interpretation of the data. Firstly, that the white-owned 'Native' trading stores existed in Zululand from the late-19<sup>th</sup> century onwards partly as conduits of colonial control but more obviously as a vital service to large communities which had limited or no mobility. They provided a livelihood for the trader, usually a person of English descent since Natal was a British Colony. Secondly the traders and their stores contributed to the social and infrastructural lives of their customers, largely Zulu-speaking people living in Zululand. Thirdly the construction of modest store buildings created items of material culture. Some still exist in their vernacular form, but those reconstructed after 1947 are viewed as examples of vernacular modernism (Umbach & Hüppauf 2005) and are considered enduring repositories of memory and intangible experience. Despite variations in the toolkit of parts, these form an undecorated architectural iconography which transcends politics and ideology given its replication in the numerous and similar *spaza* shops which have absorbed much of this trade in Zululand today.

There are two threads to the investigation: one investigates the trading store buildings and their deeper evocations, whilst the other analyzes the stories of the traders and their construction of identity through their memories. These are presented concurrently in order to further situate the lives of the traders within and about their store buildings. For both threads, the same theoretical framework of Post-Modernism is used in order to comprehend the data.

The first thread examines the materiality of the store building and the memories that it embodies, and suggests reasons why an entire group of people can individually imagine the generic trading store, and pin onto its virtual fabric a variety of different memories. This intangibility demanded different data, largely provided by informants in the lecture series. The responses to the phrase 'remember the trading store' elicited myriad differing memories which, when articulated, were often shared by the group. Others had specific experiential recollections which contributed to the data in the first thread discussed above.

The raw material for analyzing the trading store is its very materiality: the tool-kit of parts and its relationship with the landscape. Thus, in the absence of

customer and contemporary voices, the structure itself relates intangible stories. Analyzing its plan reveals the relationship between trader and customer, supporting trader's assertions about these connections. Few plans exist and those that do are sketchy, reinforcing the marginality of these buildings.

A method derived to compare standardized plans extant at a particular time was the use of the Marsh Catalogue (ca 1915), a locally-produced directory offering a variety of prefabricated resolutions constructed of wood-and-iron and aimed at the new settler. It lists cottages, churches, dwellings and five different options for 'Country Stores'. The standard plans detail measurements and planning arrangements characteristic of the period and thus provide data for comparison. Dovetailing this information with layouts of urban dwellings and 'cottages' from the same period (Radford 1997) shows that traders were uncharacteristically implicated in their communities, compared with their distanced urban counterparts. Analysis of material evidence thus contributed to assessing the social role of the trader.

For the second thread, the mass of information gleaned from interviews, surveys and participant observation had to be arranged in a manner which explained the information contextually, yet simultaneously allowed it to speak for itself. This conundrum was resolved by working from the data: collating information before assessing it against similar works. Presenting the interviews in dialogue form not only presenced the stories of the traders but allowed for assimilation of themes; 'We had good times' or 'It was fun'- statements that strongly indicate a positive nostalgia contrast with others which thematically expose a wistful bravado. These commonalities formed a corpus of relevant textual data which could be scrutinized against published texts with similar themes (Bohlin 2001), reinforcing the value of memories and the creation of a uniform and enduring identity as traders. Understanding traders' practises of locking their stores and going home for lunch or other periods of time could be compared in similar fashion (Harvey 2001, 2002). Other sources blurred the interface between the historical and contemporary periods, suggesting other, similar interpretations which explain the vagaries and varieties of memory (Bloch 1998). Collating the conclusions led to informed assumptions about the types of memory, its value and role in identity formation.

In tackling the two main threads, an underlying interface exists in the collation, presentation and analysis of material. Fusing anthropological data and historical detail is the foundation of this work, leading to an understanding of the links between the present and past and simultaneously providing an unstudied social history with an element of contemporary continuity.

Logistically, South Africa falls into a strange place anthropologically and historically. It has parts of a 'grand' European tradition in its connection to the British Empire, and as a result has the benefits of good archival material and a strong administrative tradition. Studying anthropology in contemporary South Africa, one cannot disregard history and historical processes as they inform the kernel of every situation and its social and cultural relations; all cultures, black and white and in-between, are in constant flux and perpetually challenged and mutating over time. History and anthropology are fused out of necessity. Buchli and Lucas refer to the 'archaeology of the contemporary past', in which the temporal distance relates to historical archaeology, that of the recent past. The same can be said for the anthropology of the contemporary past (Buchli and Lucas 2001). This duality reinforces the need for the data employed to consist of both contemporary and historical sources.

Oral sources lend insight into the processes of trade and the perceptions of the traders themselves in their world, whilst documentary and official sources place the information in a temporal context. It is vital that primary research material such as official colonial period texts, are presented as representing a voice of the time. Not only do they contribute to an historical context which strongly informs the *milieu* of the present in various ways, but they construct tensions which assist in establishing the true positions and power relations of people in socio-political networks.<sup>43</sup> For instance, in Zululand the relationships displayed in the official structures were anything but autonomous and smooth. The Report of the Tomlinson Commission alluded to this, reinforcing complaints by Magistrate Braatvedt, and his earlier (1949) dark and dire warnings.

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<sup>43</sup> Cohn notes that 'Systems of colonial control rested on knowledge, whether it was the knowledge of both the language and the culture that a missionary needed in Fiji to translate the Bible; the insight that a British official had to have in India to define landed property so that taxes could be collected; the understanding of local politics that a slaver needed in West Africa; or the sensitivity that an Indian agent had to show in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan in order to 'settle' Indians on their reservations' (Cohn 1981:231).

Formerly, Native Commissioners and officials in the service of the department of Native Affairs, found time for long informative interviews with Bantu in their offices, and even to move leisurely from place to place in the district holding meetings lasting for hours on end. In those days, the life of the Bantu was relatively simple, and so, the duties of the officials. With the increase of functions with which the department is charged, and the increasing number of problems the Bantu themselves have to cope with the administrative officials have become almost exclusively office workers, as many of them testified before the Commission. Their human contacts with the Bantu have systematically diminished (UG 61/1955:172).

This statement, pitched against the excerpt below referring to the post-Union period Native Affairs Department, shows the keenly felt deteriorating relations in the Department as well as repercussions on the ground. Retired Magistrate Braatvedt relates that the Chief Native Affairs Commissioner, now stationed detached in Pretoria instead of locally in Pietermaritzburg, sent his men to audit the Natal staff, perceived as rough and incompetent by their Pretoria-based colleagues. 'The Natal Service was, obviously, under a heavy cloud at that time' (Braatvedt 1949:48). Describing it as the 'Cinderella' of the Union' He continues,

It is a thousand pities that with the advent of the Union of South Africa one of the first acts was to abolish the Zulu Interpreter's examination, and completely to ignore a knowledge of one or other Native language as an essential qualification for officers of the Native Affairs Department, and to station them accordingly. Had the Natal policy been adopted, I have no doubt that there would have been a better understanding between the European officials and Natives in this province (Braatvedt 1949:25-6).

These dialectally juxtaposed texts create a narrative that reveals drastically increased tensions due to operation, policy change and identity formation with the advent of the centralized Afrikaner government after 1910, as well as suggesting diminished contact with Africans which in the past was much more intimate (Ginzburg 1981:277-8). These narratives can support or belie each other. Thus, this dovetailing, or alternatively contrasting, of documents assists in constructing a middle-ground for the discourse and one which is not entrenched in any particular political paradigm. This technique was useful in pitting the memory of Hazel Ueckerman, now aged 101, with the same story, or parts of it, related by Braatvedt who was directly involved, and who documented the event in his memoirs in the same decade as they happened. This fusion of anecdote and memory can be verified by official documentation in the archives, adding to the number of voices that experienced it.



### 1.3 Explanation of terms used/ disclaimer

Some words used in innocence in the past are now considered pejorative. These are only used, in their historic context, when in a direct quotation. The format of translated Zulu and Afrikaans words in historic documentation has been reproduced, and may vary widely, thus when discussing the material, contemporary spelling is used. Place names are retained as spelt historically, as this is the benchmark for cross-reference. A recent reconsideration of Zulu lexicography ensures that Doke *et al* (1990) is referenced when necessary.

*White/European/African:* From an ethnographic point of view this study examines a group of disparate people with an ethnic similarity. White traders are studied in the context they occupied among a number of different cultural groups, being Zulu, Tsonga, or Hlubi, over a large geographical area. Work amongst minority groups within a greater whole is not unusual, but it must be noted that in this case the minority group comprises people from discrete ethnic backgrounds (albeit largely originating from the British Isles) defined collectively by their race. By the time they came to trade, some were already second or third generation residents in South Africa, working within societies defined collectively by their race, despite cultural differences within this category.

I am reticent to use the word Zulu to describe the customers of the stores, as many of them are not, in fact, Zulu. Referring to specific ethnicity is problematic, except in the case of the Afrikaner/Dutch/Trekker/Boer who have a strong identity and a singular otherness amongst others interbred with indistinctive cultural origins.<sup>44</sup> Where I am certain of affiliation, 'Zulu' is used.

Historical documents refer to 'natives' and 'Bantu' to describe people of aboriginal origin in Natal and Zululand, whilst 'European' and 'white' are used for settlers. Today, 'black' white' 'Indian' and 'coloured'<sup>45</sup> exist in unashamed colloquial nomenclature, mostly used as a means of description. This convention is followed. As this work is largely historical and backgrounded with colonial and nationalist imperatives which entrenched these differences, using

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<sup>44</sup> Including those of primarily English settler descent. See Schutte (1989)

<sup>45</sup> 'Coloured' describes any people of mixed race

the broad based descriptors of 'white' or 'European' describing the traders of this origin, and 'African' or 'black', unless otherwise qualified, to describe people of Zulu, Tsonga, Hlubi, Xhosa or other, ensures a continuity of reading. Although the plurality of specific ethnicities should be embraced, it is problematic in this instance, given the many options and the engagement with history. Additional notes on the Zulu, Tembe Tsonga and Hlubi form the Appendix.

*San/Bushmen:* Discussion on the appropriate nomenclature is ongoing.<sup>46</sup> In the absence of any clear ruling, both words are used together.

*Native/Bantu:* 'Native' is used to discuss aboriginal inhabitants only when forming part of quotes or titles. The word is pejorative given its part in the structural and legislative history of South Africa. 'Bantu' is a Zulu word meaning 'the people', which is pejorative as it was much used in the last phase of the Nationalist Government, especially after the Group Areas legislations. It is used here when it forms part of quotes or titles of books or articles.

*Boer/Trekboer:* This means 'farmer' in Dutch, referring to immigrant pastoralists of Dutch origin. They moved southeast from the highlands into Natal, and ran the colony of Natalia based in Pietermaritzburg until British take over in 1843.

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<sup>46</sup>[http://www.mg.co.za/articlePage.aspx?articleid=318400&area=/columnist\\_franz\\_kruger/01/10/07](http://www.mg.co.za/articlePage.aspx?articleid=318400&area=/columnist_franz_kruger/01/10/07)

## 1.4 Conclusion

A trading store run by the same family provides through its oral history, a microcosm of unseen and unheard relationships and positive stories which are important to document. Certainly, in the writing of the new histories of a post-apartheid South Africa, these issues need to be explored in order to add complexity and conviction to what threaten to become one-dimensional political histories. The connections and dependence on government agency, the larger commercial network through suppliers and the breeding of social conscience through immersion in a society of 'other' once trading is 'in the blood', entail cascading social networks which deserve description. These tales relate varying linkages to different groups, both vertically and horizontally. The primary interwoven relationships that contributed to the operation of the stores, providing necessary facilities and a variety of social and economic functions in remote areas in a non-partisan fashion, have largely disappeared.

It is noted that somehow a simple building and associated complex social institution has become a strong part of national and provincial memory. How this happened is unclear, and certainly is not questioned by the people holding the memory. It is suspected that the connection is situated within the social relations of the traders. Thus, through the eyes of a number of multi-generational Zululand trading families, connections and relationships are explored against the backdrop of the store buildings and the political systems that created and removed them. It is hoped that this will foster a more critical appreciation of modest architectures entrenched in the social realm.

Post-Modernism is employed as the general theoretical framework, as it sufficiently addresses the plurality of the social and architectural landscapes within which the contemporary study is conducted. Identifying the *spaza* shop as *pastiche* valorizes the trading store of old and provides a point of entry for understanding the different themes. Post-Modernism is appropriate when addressing issues of memory, given its layered and changing nature.

The literature review has contextualized the main themes of the discussion to follow, and has offered insight as to how some of the basic assumptions were

made. The two predominant threads of the store as a repository of memories, and memory in the construction of identity have been expanded upon, and these are concluded in Chapter 6. In addition, the extensive vernacular architecture section assists in familiarizing the reader with the variant options available, but constructs the framework for further general discussions on the material culture. More specifically, the architectural resolutions of the trading store and *spaza* shop are couched in vernacular decisions, and their construction and endurance has provided an architectural legacy which is monumental, although in their lack of partisan status, the buildings are not, themselves, monuments.

The methodological approach uses both anthropological and historical methods in order to create a thicker 'history'. This means that participant observation, semi-structured interviews and positivist data collection were combined with archival and paper-based information. Particularly beneficial was the presentation of a series of public lectures which formed a peer review.

Chapter 2 will give a brief background to the important events in early trade on the East Coast of South Africa, as this information is necessary in the construction of the relationships between the trader, the store and the human environment. This is followed by a more focused architectural section as the physicality of the trading store is a constant through the following chapters. These use the structure of the physical building to describe in part, the commercial, social and political lives of the traders. In addition, the building in all of its manifestations was a constant part of trade, and it is on this that the lives of the traders and their evocations hang.

## Chapter 2: Notes on historical and architectural themes

*Material culture plays a fundamental part as triggers for memory associations and being able to digest and comprehend memory, in addition with synthesizing memory and history into a more real framework (Tilley et al. 2006:505).*

The first chapter has laid out the methodological and theoretical approaches, as well as the corpus of literature consulted in order to correctly understand and interpret the oral, written and material cultural data. It has given brief glimpses into the lives of the traders, which are presented as isolated representations, but has done little to contextualize the descriptions of the trading store.

Since this research focuses on the physical trading store buildings and the lives and memories of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Zululand traders adjunct to them, it is important to background the succeeding ethnographic and analytical chapters with historical and architectural information to supplement the stories and contextualize the buildings. This chapter thus introduces the reader to salient events in the formation of KwaZulu-Natal and illustrates that the traders did not merely 'drop' into a benign and orderly landscape. Moreover, it is vital to understand where these people came from, how they came to trade, and how they framed their worlds and created their identities as traders.

General historical notes detailing the formation of the colony through trade preface the more focused sections which deal specifically with the ambits of trade; money and provision of trading sites due to the establishment of the Reserves and Locations. Social notes deal with the traders' interdependence with missionaries and magistrates as well as cataclysmic events such as the Rinderpest, which altered the social structures of subsistence economies in rural areas forever, and substantially changed the role of the rural trader.

Since the trading store building is the physical core behind the ethnographic chapters, further discussion to supplement the brief commentary in the previous chapter is needed. This will ground the development of these store buildings more specifically, providing a context relating the material cultural world to the experienced, lived and remembered world of the Zululand traders.

## 2.1 Notes on historical themes

- **The advent of the rural trader**

Arab traders reached as far south as Lorenço Marques<sup>47</sup> by the 1820s and Portuguese traders from the Cape had touched land in Natal itinerantly. However, until recently, the lower section of the African east coast was relatively unexploited as a source of permanent trade.

Englishman Francis Farewell arrived in Natal in 1824. Deciding to establish a trading post at the Bay of Natal, he struck a business deal with JR Thompson and Co., wholesalers in Cape Town. He was soon joined by Henry Francis Fynn, John Cane, Joseph Powell, Thomas Halstead and Henry Ogle. These traders set up a small wattle-and-daub building some 12 feet square at Port Natal, now known as Durban. From there they initiated trade with Zulu-speaking people, exchanging hides and ivory for colonially-manufactured goods. Their first customer was a man named Mahamba who took them across the Tugela River to meet with his king, Shaka kaSenzangakhona,<sup>48</sup> residing at KwaBulawayo, then close to the present-day town of Eshowe. A land deal between the Zulu king and these traders evolved from this visit, signed by the traders and Shaka, and witnessed by four of the latter's men. The allocated land in the grant document specified the Bay of Natal, the promontory lying ten miles south of this known as 'The Point', northwards along the coast to the 'Gumgelote',<sup>49</sup> and inland some 100 miles to the territory of 'Gowagnewkos' (Stuart & McK.Malcolm 1950:87-88).

This land deal between the traders and Shaka is noteworthy in that they were mutual beneficiaries of a transaction that was comprehended by both parties. Shaka wanted the trade and the traders wanted land. Significantly, this original cession was made to FG Farewell and Co., and not to the reigning British monarch, King George. Shaka considered Farewell to be the chief of this ceded territory, on condition that trade was conducted exclusively with himself (Ibid:1).

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<sup>47</sup> Present day Maputo

<sup>48</sup>In 1824 Natal was suffering the effects of the *Mfecane*, the massive social disruptions beginning in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and lasting until the 1840s, particularly during the reign of Shaka kaSenzangakhona. These 'Shakan depredations' affected the entire sub-Saharan region and created a wasteland which was occupied by the arriving white settlers. *Mfecane* is a matter of intense historical debate; refer to Cobbing (1990), Wylie (2006), Wright (1971) etc.

<sup>49</sup> Umdloti River

Charles Ballard describes Shaka's enthusiastic patronage of the early European traders, suggesting that by allowing their settlement in his jurisdiction, he was the primary beneficiary and thus had them in his control (Ballard 1981:5). Shaka's privileged and singular access to European medicaments and other desirable goods accorded him power, in addition to a more subversive benefit in that these traders sheltered refugees from Zululand who had fled south into Natal to escape his 'depredations'.<sup>50</sup> Shaka thus continued to conduct indirect rule over his erstwhile subjects.

By the 1830s, British settlement at Port Natal was growing. Simultaneously, pastoralist farmers of Dutch descent known as Voortrekkers<sup>51</sup> were moving in a south-easterly direction across the Drakensberg Mountains into Natal, occupying large tracts of land to the north of the region. They established the short-lived Dutch Republic known as Natalia, at Pietermaritzburg, which was abandoned once the British annexed the trading port at Durban.<sup>52</sup> They had engaged in separate negotiations for land with the Zulu, until Dingane, Shaka's half-brother and successor, killed the Trekker leader Piet Retief and his men as a result of a land settlement dispute.

In 1844 the Zulu King Mpande<sup>53</sup> and Special Commissioner to Natal, Sir Henry Cloete signed the treaty formalizing the Colony of Natal as part of the British-controlled Cape Colony. This extended the boundaries of the original agreement between Shaka and Farewell, outlining the territory of Natal and, by exclusion, Zululand. Natal Colony now extended to the Drakensberg Mountains in the north-west, the Umzimkhulu River to the south, the Tugela and the Buffalo Rivers to the north-east and the Indian Ocean coastline to the south-east. Mpande and Cloete signed a separate and significant treaty ceding St Lucia Estuary in Zululand to the Colony of Natal. This was strategic for the Crown since it gave them trafficable, sheltered waters in the heart of Zulu territory. Included in this demarcation was the site of Lake Store at Makakatana (Theal 1886:60-61).

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<sup>50</sup> See footnote 48 above on the *Mfecane*

<sup>51</sup> The Voortrekkers were vehemently anti-British, having 'trekked' by ox-wagon from the Cape of Good Hope rather than be subjected to British rule, only to encounter the Colonials again in the new settlement at Port Natal.

<sup>52</sup> Although Dutch farmers did not feature prominently in the trading history of KwaZulu-Natal this helps to situate the increasing social complexity of the growing colony.

<sup>53</sup> Half-brother and successor to Dingane

The early traders practiced a mobile form of trade, moving between port and customer as opposed to a sedentary option in which the customer visited the store. Their base of Port Natal, or D'Urban as it became known, grew to accommodate the existing residents as well as the influx of other immigrants of European descent *en route* to the interior. Relations with Africans continued to be mutually beneficial, allowing the upper echelons of Zulu society an outlet for easily sourced goods like skins, ivory and metals in exchange for prestige imported items such as iron hoes, cloth and beads.

Little in the way of permanent buildings existed at Port Natal until 1850, which, as the main point of entry, was the tacit capital. George Russell described:

The first whitewashed house you sighted was a long thatched store of wattle and daub known to everyone as 'Cato's'. It stood in an open space shaded and sheltered by the same grand trees that remained to the date of Mr. GC Cato's death in 1893. It was the centre of our civilization. (Russell 1899:116)

Russell wrote that the Voortrekker Republic of Natalia at Pietermaritzburg had permanent buildings but none of any merit. This town was a centre for Dutch farmers in the interior who were supplied by traders from D'Urban. Other new arrivals at the time supplied the Zulu.

Among the Emigrants (*sic*) many young men took to Zulu trading, principally for cattle. They went either in wagons, carts or on foot, whilst others started Overberg<sup>54</sup> to slaughter Buck (*sic*) for their skins, or to trade guns and powder, coffee, sugar and sundries with the Boers for skins, horns, cattle and horses. (Ibid:113)

Throughout this period most mobile trade from the centres of Durban<sup>55</sup> and Pietermaritzburg was through the efforts of hunter-traders and *smouse*, peddlers who traveled by ox-wagons from which they traded, returning to urban centres once a cost-effective load of skins had been collected. Goods were exchanged through barter as money did not formally exist in Natal, and the value of hides and ivory was negotiated with each transaction. 'Value' was non-

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<sup>54</sup> Over the Drakensberg mountains

<sup>55</sup> Port Natal was renamed D'Urban in 1835 although the two names continued to co-exist for a while. In 1854 the Borough of Durban was proclaimed, dropping the apostrophe.



empirical and uncountable, being solely related to supply and demand in a specific place at a specific time.

A series of Commissions, Bills and Proclamations from the British takeover in 1843 provided for the establishment and operation of the rural trading store as we know it. The Colonial Government viewed the trader as a necessary vehicle of colonization, and the original need for stores was specifically identified in the following passage from the Native Commission's Report, 1853. 'Proposed stores within Locations' notes the following:

There should be one or more store-keepers licensed to open stores in each location, for the purpose of purchasing the produce of the Kafirs, and supplying them with the goods they require at fair market prices, excluding only the sale of gunpowder, firearms and intoxicating liquors. (NCP 8/3/1 1853:54)

This legislation preventing the sale of guns, gunpowder and alcohol to Africans was a primary point of contention for traders and their relationships with officials and customers for the next century. Living amongst the people with whom they traded, many traders considered themselves in the business of commerce and not politics, and illegal sales of guns and alcohol were often carried out. Some of their stories are related in Chapter 5.

Formal store-keeping legislation had begun earlier with Ordinance No 4 of 1848 enabling trade, which was repealed a decade later by Law No. 9 of 1858. The first major piece of legislation was Natal Law No. 16 of 1862, entitled '*Law to regulate, in certain respects, the Conduct of Inland Trade by persons residing in the Colony*'. Its preamble sets out the legislation and related concerns, revealing the issues that existed in trade at the time.

Whereas persons residing in this Colony are in the habit of carrying on trade with the natives and others residing beyond the land boundaries of the same; and whereas other persons engage in hunting and shooting, and for these purposes proceed from and return to the Colony in prosecution thereof; and whereas it is expedient so to regulate the conduct of such traders and hunters, to the end that the illicit trading in firearms and munitions of war may be prevented, and for this purpose to provide measures which will reach and apply to such traders and hunters before their departure from, and after their return to, the Colony.

A number of different factors made the 'penetration of this wilderness' possible for those stores established in rural areas. To consolidate Colonial power and to encourage the peopling of this new territory, a series of aggressive settlement schemes was implemented by entrepreneurs in the late 1840s. 'Immigration Schemes' such as those promoted by Byrne and Moreland appealed particularly to English and Irish working-class people with limited prospects at home. Thus many families crowded into the steerage of ships with their scant possessions, landing in Port Natal with some farm tools and a promise of a plot of land. Most of these settlement schemes were doomed from the outset. The colonizers arrived in a raw and untamed landscape with few roads, wild animals and soils that were unfamiliar and difficult to work. Not many settlers remained on their allotments, choosing instead to find work as labourers or transport riders. These immigrants formed the second major wave of traders.

An important event in the development of 'store' culture in the Colony of Natal (as opposed to Zululand) was heralded with the arrival of the 'passengers' in the 1860s. These were Asiatic people from India and Mauritius who sailed to Natal with the express purpose of trading.<sup>56</sup> They were vital in the establishment of mainly urban stores as well as expanding trading prospects to different areas.

The original 1844 land grant between Cloete and Mpande had been articulated in terms of feudal land tenure systems, in the understanding of the Zulu. This was in contrast with the British approach of outright land rights which was adopted once the Colonial foothold was established after 1850. Hilda Kuper, speaking of the neighbouring amaSwazi, reinforces this opposition, citing phrases from Bohannan (1963) when she describes variant perceptions of space. She suggests that Europeans reference space through mechanisms and technology based on inventions such as the sextant and, in Natal, the theodolite. This defined and appropriated space differently from the Zulu, for whom space is related to sociality, relations, 'kinsmen, time and effort.' (Kuper 2003:49). The Colonial British thus perceived their tenure to be secure, which

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<sup>56</sup> Known as 'passengers', these settlers could afford to pay for their own passage, and came from a history of trading families or as part of a trans-Indian Ocean expansion of trade. Ironically, most Indian traders were known as 'Arabs' until relatively recently. "Passengers" differed from the '1860 Settlers' who arrived as indentured labourers to work on the tea plantations and later became indispensable in a variety of different jobs such as domestic workers and waiters on the newly emergent Natal Government Railways trains.

precipitated surveys of land for white settlement. They released newly demarcated Crown Lands for sale to settlers in order to finance the establishment of the Colony, meaning that traders were more likely to invest time and money establishing stores once security of tenure was confirmed. Despite these changes, the travelling *smouse* continued to operate throughout the region until the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Because of the insecure tenure, there were no official stores in Zululand until the 1879 Anglo-Zulu War, when the first stores emerged around garrison towns. Brunner and Adams set up trade in Eshowe in southern Zululand. Alfred Adams' well-known 'Camp Store' specialized in beer for the garrison. He owned a warehouse at the Point in Durban to stock this beverage (Mikula 1981:72). With war came infrastructure. The arrival of British infantry in Durban and Cape Town reinforced the need for roads, thus creating the need for stores in far-flung places along military routes. At the end of this short-lived war the Colonial officials Sir Theophilus Shepstone and Sir Garnet Wolseley divided Zululand into 13 chiefdoms. The aim of this was to fragment the power of the Zulu King Cetshwayo who had been sent into exile, and to prevent the possibility of another war with the Zulus.

After the Declaration of Zululand as a Colonial territory in 1888 and its final annexation in 1897, land could be allotted and traders could formally move in, even though many had already been in trade for years. When a trader wanted a site on which to construct a store, application had to be made to the relevant authority,<sup>57</sup> upon which a trading site was allocated. These applications were processed judiciously. Store sites were issued depending on the perceived need for a trading store in the area and subject to the existence of other stores in the vicinity. They were allocated subject to a 99-year lease, which included land around the store site which could be used to supplement income. The primary purpose of these traders was to benefit resident blacks, to provide points of contact for the government, and provide a living for the trader.

The Colonial Government needed money to pay for the expansion into the interior, the fledgling Natal Government Railways and other events such as the

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<sup>57</sup> Before 1905, this was the Colony of Natal's Secretary for Native Affairs.

Anglo-Zulu War of 1879. To raise funds, the Government sold further Crown Lands to settlers on a quitrent basis, on the condition that they occupied the land. The farms were in areas further and further from central markets which necessitated interstitial points of trade providing accommodation. In many cases, these places were set up a day's ride apart and were over-nighting points along the route. For decades fording rivers was problematic, and many entrepreneurs took the opportunity of setting up stores at river crossings. These traders ran ferries or pontoons across major rivers which were easy to cross in winter, but impassable in summer. Position was thus an important factor in the development of the more successful stores, especially during wartime with Colonial troops crossing rivers and requiring billeting.

Between 1899 and 1902 the Anglo-Zulu War and its subsequent economic boom brought another wave of settlers. Many British soldiers and civilians remained in Natal, choosing the African sun and the opportunities of a new colony rather than return to England. Like the earlier Immigration Scheme settlers, they had few prospects at home and would turn their hand to anything to survive. At this time, since Zululand was an administered territory, freehold ownership of land by whites was prohibited and a British 'Resident' was required to oversee law and order, with a detachment of 50 Zulu 'attendants' (Brookes & Webb 1965:146). This political 'Settlement of Zululand' created more opportunity for traders.

After the First World War, demobilized soldiers arrived home with few prospects, many suffering from 'shell shock'. The new Union Government allotted farmland to returning servicemen, particularly in Zululand.<sup>58</sup> Like their predecessors, many chose trade as one of few options. RH Rutherford was granted land on the Umfolozi Flats but lost his sugar crop in the 1918 flood. He and his family relocated to trade on the Mozambique border at Ndumu. Jock Morrison had not served in Europe, but started trading as a young man at Makakatana Store shortly after World War I. As Ursula Morrison relates:

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<sup>58</sup> In Natal, land was largely subscribed and land in Zululand had been released for white settlement through the *Zululand Lands Delimitations Commission* of 1905.

'David Brodie, one of the partners in a business called G.A. Challis & Co. needed a young partner to take the place of Mr. Challis who had been so badly shell shocked during the great War of 1914-18, that he was incapable of running the shop known as 'Lake Store' at Makakatana. As David Brodie made regular trips to Scotland he needed a young and reliable partner. David Brodie and Mr. Challis were ex-Natal Government Policeman.'

The outbreak of World War II also prompted entry into trade. Hazel Ueckerman's first husband Jack Irons was unfit to enlist. Tired of taunts and accusations of being unpatriotic, they moved to join Jack's brother George who was trading at Hlabisa. Their son David was only two years old.

- **The hunter-traders and relations with the Zulu Kings**

The historical context is vital in establishing the relations between traders and their customers as they developed in Zululand. Though Shaka's dealings have been briefly discussed, consideration of them is expanded to include the subsequent kings Dingane and Mpande. David Hedges investigated the balance of trade carried out between the Portuguese based at Lorenzo Marques, English traders at Port Natal, and Shaka and his brother Dingane.

Hedges notes that Shaka was determined that he would have exclusive monopoly over trade with foreigners, and that his subjects were not allowed to have any dealings with them on an individual basis (Hedges 1978:231). He describes Shaka's 'need to monopolise the Europeans, their skills and artifacts in the exclusive interest of the Zulu ruling lineage' as integrating economy and politics and manipulating relations with the Europeans at the Cape (Ibid:238). This stance is supported by Ballard, who reiterates that Shaka gained material superiority by allowing only the Zulu elite to deal with the traders (Ballard 1981:5). Asserting that the traders were as important to the Zulu as the custom that the Zulus generated was to the traders, Hedges concluded that initially the white traders not only contributed to economic generation, but contributed 'to the Zulu king's ideological and political supremacy'. This was to such an extent that at a later stage, the 'Zulu royal lineage...succeeded in monopolizing trade and the whites' military skills exclusively to its own advantage until Dingane's defeat' (Hedges 1978:225).

The position of the hunter-trader as the 'outrider' of the 'European industrial enterprise' in the supply of raw materials and goods, was 'responsible, initially, for integrating Natal and Zululand into a European-dominated international economy' (Ballard 1981:17). As previously mentioned, products of trade were vehicles for domination. 'Dingane publicly emphasized his royal authority by decrees limiting the type and colour of beads worn. He took care to specify to traders the sort of beads he required' (Hedges 1978:241). This was not limited to aesthetic requirements. Dingane realized the potential political position of the traders and attempted to manipulate them at an early stage. Notably, he suggested that Henry Francis Fynn be appointed as 'his agent' in Natal with the ultimate intention being total control of the ivory trade. Whilst the traders made a good living out of their work, Dingane had great regard for the value of the British traders in Zululand. He realized that they were too important to his ends to create disruption, illustrating the reciprocity of commerce and power between traders and the Zulu ruling house (Ibid:245-246).

Charles Ballard suggests that hunting and trading was a lot easier than farming for the early settlers who usually had little money. Trading needed less capital expenditure and was more profitable. 'The hunter-trader was one of the most important contributors to Natal's economy from its very beginnings until the mid-1860s' (Ballard 1981:6-7). In conflating 'hunters' and 'traders' as a single concept, Ballard conjures up images of renegade transience. This term is found in early legislation, revealing the perceptions of the Colonial Government as far as their operations were concerned. Although the words 'hunter' and 'trader' were separated, their mention in a pair suggests their conceptual inseparability. Law No 16 of 1862 intended to regulate the manner in which hunter-traders worked by establishing limitations which restricted their field of operations as well as the sale of guns and munitions of war. Moreover, the hunter-trader was obliged to apply to the magistrate for a license to carry out his dealings. Thus they were officially sanctioned, forming part of a hierarchy of Colonial operations, although their precarious footing meant that the voluntary involvement of the hunter-trader in the ongoing political struggles of the Zulu was mercenary 'when cattle, ivory and hides were the rewards' (Ibid:7).

Such self-seeking endeavours had not endeared traders to Zulu King Mpande, although they continued to be viewed as valuable allies of the Crown. Some traders in the vicinity of Ndongakusuka, the site of the succession battle between Cetshwayo and his brother Mbuyazi in 1856, saw opportunity in acting as double agents. As far as the Colonial Government was concerned they were familiar with the land and its inhabitants, whereas their Zulu customers valued their goods as well as their literacy. This median meant that they played vital roles in negotiation whilst occupying socially liminal roles. Noted Zululand trader John Dunn interceded in this conflict, taking with him 35 Natal Police and 100 heavily armed Zulu hunters known as *iziNqobo* (The Crushers). Although his firepower sided with Mbuyazi, after the battle the victor, King Cetshwayo appointed him as his European advisor<sup>59</sup> once he had taken the throne from his father Mpande. Cetshwayo appointed Dunn as chief and allotted him territory, a position which led him to take some 49 Zulu women in marriage in addition to his English wife. Similarly, Cornelius Vijn, a Dutch *smous*, was compromised. Summoned to take goods to Cetshwayo at the outbreak of the Anglo-Zulu War in early 1879, he was forewarned by one of the King's brothers that 'if war began between the Zulus and the whites, very probably we (traders) should be made shorter by a head' (Vijn 1988 [1856]:18).<sup>60</sup> Despite the threat, Vijn's goods and cattle were protected by the Zulu King throughout the war; a privilege to which even the King's subjects were not entitled. At the same time, he was approached by Sir Garnet Wolseley of the Colonial Government to persuade Cetshwayo to surrender. Thus, the early Natal traders were adept at straddling the political territory between the traditional and colonial authorities.

Despite this symbiotic intrigue, the relationship between traders and the Zulu deteriorated, reinforced by the outflow of hides of Zulu cattle killed during this period of unrest, as well as the large amounts of hides traded in times of bovine

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<sup>59</sup> Dunn was appointed by the Colonial Border Agent Joshua Walmesley to mediate in the succession battle. He was unsuccessful and traders in the area lost cattle and goods. However, the actual number of dispossessed traders swelled after the fact, with over two dozen traders claiming compensation. It emerged that some traders had joined in battle hoping for a share of the spoils. Ballard concludes his description with 'The deep involvement of Natal's white traders in the Zulu civil war of 1856 is a strong indication of the manner in which hunter-traders responded to the economic opportunities offered by political conditions in the Zulu kingdom' (Ballard 1981:10).

<sup>60</sup> A similar warning was sent by the Zulu Royal House to James Rorke trading at Rorke's Drift, the site of one of the most significant battles of the war.

sickness.<sup>61</sup> Towards the end of the 1860s the hunter-traders were no longer symbiotic partners, perceived to have introduced disease which killed Zulu cattle and reaped maximum benefit with the greater availability of cheap hides. This was a turning point in historical power relations between traders and their customers, changing the mechanisms of negotiation and creating a legacy to be inherited by the 20<sup>th</sup> century traders.

- **The position of the missionaries**

Like traders, Zululand missionaries were politically compromised and often pushed into political and mediatory roles (Hernæs in Simensen 1984:84). Echoing John Dunn and his role at Ndondakusuka, Norwegian Missionary Bishop Schreuder informed the Colonial authorities of the movement of every Zulu regiment from Eshowe during the battle (Etherington 1978:34).<sup>62</sup> Missionaries and traders were often inseparable in that many missionaries' children turned to trade, and many traders' children became missionaries; the landscape that they shared ensured a certain predisposition.

Missionary work and store-keeping were similar pursuits: 'It is said that in the early days in South Africa the missionary and the storekeeper each pitched his tent in the wilderness simultaneously, the missionary recruiting for souls, the storekeeper for cash customers' (Hourwich Reyher 1999 [1948]:36). More recently, in her seminal work on the Edendale Mission, Sheila Meintjies noted that the 'Missionaries acted, metaphorically, as the spiritual wing of imperialism' (Meintjies 1988:29). Similarly, traders would have acted as the economic wing.

Thus, closely and symbiotically associated with the 19<sup>th</sup> century traders were missionaries who came from diverse ecumenical and cultural backgrounds. Colonial Natal was a missionary's paradise; an 'empty wasteland' perceived at the time as full of barbarous tribes ripe for conversion. Most denominations were represented. The American Missionary Society, Methodists and Wesleyans, as well as Anglicans represented Protestant churches, whilst Lutherans were predominant, founding many German settlements. The

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<sup>61</sup> Lung-sickness and Rinderpest (discussed later in this chapter) were introduced into Zululand by traders. The former arrived in the 1850s whereas the Rinderpest spread from East Africa in the 1890s. Both killed thousands of Zulu cattle, whose hides were purchased by traders.

<sup>62</sup> He later distanced his Church from the Colony, as he was not supportive of British expansion.



Norwegian and Swedish Missionary Societies established themselves mainly in Zululand, and the Trappists, amongst other Roman Catholic groups, established remote monasteries centred on the main Mariannhill mission near Durban.

Common to all missionary mandates was the 'civilizing' of African people and spreading the word of the Christian God. Gathering of a new flock was achieved through a variety of means. The Berlin Missionary Posselt related one of the more interesting and pragmatic variations. In the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, joining a mission was perceived as an escape route for young African girls who were dissatisfied with the choice of grooms offered by their fathers. Girls would 'elope', taking sanctuary at the Mission which often paid the *lobola* (bride price) to their parents. This inextricably tied them to the workings and doctrines of the mission, and they would end up being converted by tender means, marrying a man who had arrived in a similar fashion (Bourquin 1994:93).

Missionaries encouraged the new African converts or *amaKholwa* to dress appropriately in modest European garb using imported fabric and thread for making clothes, rather than the scanty hide loin coverings that 'traditional' Africans wore. Traders in close proximity thus supplied fabric and thread to make these clothes. The trading store provided access to the implements of 'honest toil' such as colonially-manufactured hoes and ploughs, the latter being essential for large-scale farming and the production of crop surpluses. This symbiosis was long-lived. In 1893, Thomas Maxwell, the Magistrate at Lower Umfolozi, wrote in his Annual Report that 'The hand hoe is used by the heathen, and the American Eagle plough by the Christian Natives for cultivation' (Blue Book for Native Affairs 1898:C35).

The relationship between the missions and the stores worked on an economic level. Meintjies continues, quoting from James Archbell's journal referring to the Northern Cape, 'We do not know the extent to which money circulated beyond the frontier of the colony, but the existence of a store provided a new outlet for the sale of surpluses. A new form of exchange became possible' (Meintjies 1988:47). For new converts this synergy between mission operations and the trading store meant that credit for European-made goods could be extended until the first harvest. Thus, locking these early Christians into debt precipitated,

for them, a move into a western system of extended commerce, in which trade did not rely solely on the direct barter of any extra goods. Succinctly, the formation of missionary lands created a reliance on monetary economics, in the same manner as did the arrival of the trading store. Any income resulting from the sale of surplus produce together with the means to spend it satisfied both the missionaries and the traders.

The Colonial Government's stance was clear, and this relationship was entrenched in policy. The '*Proceedings and Report*' of the 1852-3 Commission facilitated the setting up of stores in the newly demarcated Locations. The establishment of missions on Reserve lands was strongly recommended (and noted as such) in the same report. This declared that missionaries were necessary and that emphasis should be placed on religious teaching rather than on secular conversion (NCP 8/3/1 1853:54). The initial proposals included mission sites in the newly established Natal Reserve lands, and allocated some to the American Missionary Society to set up stations under Grout, Lindley and Adams, the first missionaries in Natal in 1847 (Brookes & Hurwitz 1957:3).

The Zululand mission stations were not sited in specific Mission Reserves as were their Natal counterparts. Rather, they fell loosely into 'Reserve land', many established in proximity to trading stores. The missionaries, largely Lutheran of the Norwegian and Hermannsburg Missionary Societies, negotiated their access to sites in Zululand directly with the Zulu King (Etherington 1978:26-27). Their tenure was often insecure: Mpande, who ruled between 1840 and 1872, resisted the conversion of his people and gave land unwillingly, resulting in small groups of converts living on isolated mission stations (Ibid:34).

Thus the mechanisms with which these groups accessed the 'empty' landscape of the Zulu were initially determined by a balanced system of power relations, in which the traders and the missionaries had goods, and the Zulus had land. Sometimes the stores predated the mission stations and sometimes it was the other way round. Either way, they each opened up space for the inclusion of the other. Both had a personal interest in trade; either ploughshares or souls. The symbiotic relationship that these two institutions enjoyed was important in writing fresh new social and architectural texts on the land.

- **The settling of the Locations and Reserves<sup>63</sup>**

In 1844 the Special Commissioner to Natal, Henry Cloete, suggested housing an estimated 80 000 to 100 000 refugees from the *Mfecane* rumblings in Zululand in demarcated self-administered Locations (Theal 1886:62). The Natal Native Commission was established between 1846 and 1847 to implement settling these dislocated people (Brookes & Hurwitz 1957:4). Gazetting these Locations was implemented in November 1846 with Zwartkops near Pietermaritzburg, and in the following year Umlazi, Inanda and Umvoti. By 1853 the Umzinyathi, Impafana and Drakensberg Mountain Location known as Kahlamba had been demarcated (Brookes & Webb 1965:60).

Provision was made for three types of 'Reserves'. 'Locations' were placed in Trust to accommodate refugees. 'Special Reserves' were allocated to specific tribes with a distinct leader, such as the Putili Trust, which housed the amaNgwe people under chief Phuthini. Thirdly 'Missionary Reserves' were intended to house missionary enclaves who would catalyze the colonization of Africans through religious means (NCP 8/3/19:35).

Unlike the traders, missionaries had the fortune of being scheduled into land allocations, being allotted land which was gazetted as 'Mission lands' or 'mission Reserves' which fell within the 'Native Trust' or 'Location land'. The establishment of these Locations and Reserves allocated for occupation by black people from the late 1840s onwards is a vital point in provincial history and a fundamental component of subsequent national racial policy.

John Wright (1971) suggests that some of these areas such as Impendle, were demarcated 'buffer Locations'. Settling blacks onto marginal lands, he asserts, would have shielded the newly settled English farmers in the Natal Midlands from continuous stock raids by the San/Bushmen living in the uKhahlamba Drakensberg Mountains. A second rationale for the establishment of the 'Native Reserves' was the constant movement of Africans from Zululand into Natal. Waves of internecine disturbance had followed the *Mfecane* and even up until the 1880s Africans were moving south into Natal. These dislocated people such

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<sup>63</sup> Tribal lands in Natal were known as Locations, whilst after the Zululand Lands Delimitation Commission in 1905, those in Zululand were known as Reserves (Brookes & Hurwitz 1957:4).

as the amaNgwane and the amaHlubi applied to the Secretary of Native Affairs, Sir Theophilus Shepstone, for land on which to settle. Effectively refugees, they were allocated land in the Kahlamba Locations and Drakensberg Locations No 1 and 2 respectively (Brookes & Hurwitz 1957:5). Their stability was threatened from 1861 when Griqua people moving into the Kokstad area prompted northerly movements of people ahead of them into Natal from this 'unoccupied' area between Colonial Natal and the Cape known as 'Nomansland'. These refugees applied for land in Natal, placing extra pressure on resources and simultaneously encountering the southerly occupation of land by white settlers. Locations in this region such as Impendle absorbed some of the pressure. Brookes and Hurwitz suggest that the Upper Mkomazi Locations and those in Alexandra and Alfred Counties were demarcated at this time (Ibid 1957:6).

Situation in Locations as well as the Mission and Special Reserves in Natal, and later the Zululand Reserves, was a prime opportunity for early traders. Not only did an untapped possibility for trade exist, but the Zulu were under increasing pressure to adopt a more effective barter/monied economy, forced upon them by the Colonial Government through the implementation of Hut Tax.

- **Hut Tax**

Congruent with the establishment of the Locations, in 1849 the Colonial Government instituted a Hut Tax payable by these newly agglomerated residents. This was intended to pay for roads, rail and other infrastructure, as well as contributing to the administration of Native Affairs. Hut Tax was initially payable in cattle since money was not largely available. First set at 7 shillings, it rose over the years to 14 shillings and eventually reached £1.

Hut Tax was aimed at black people living in traditional fashion under chiefs who did not, in the view of the Colonial Government, contribute to the colonial fiscus, whereas Christian converts (*amaKholwa*) living on mission stations were considered to actively contribute to the Colonial economy. These *amaKholwa* resided in 'European' fashion in orthogonal buildings whilst those living in a tribal system usually occupied circular structures. The plan form thus became the grounds for taxation; those in circular buildings paid, and those in orthogonal buildings were exempt. However, for some this criterion hit

particularly hard since traditionally each wife in a polygamous homestead had her own sleeping and cooking huts, each of which was taxed. Nerissa Ramdhani infers that as tax was imposed on literally each hut in a homestead, it was considered a mechanism to discourage polygamy (Ramdhani 1986:15). Officially for the Government, fewer wives meant fewer huts and less debt, enforcing a process of cultural change conforming to a desirable 'Christian' monogamy. In this manner it reinforced unequal power relations between the Colonial Government and the aboriginal inhabitants.

The chief was responsible for collecting tax from his subjects. For this task he received a stipend, the amount of which was dependent on the number of his followers. This arrangement made chiefs with a large jurisdiction both powerful and wealthy. The tax would be collected from the chief on an appointed day, often by the magistrate. The process of collection was time consuming, and required much administration and organization.<sup>64</sup> Alan Hattersley noted that,

Shepstone...was obliged to leave his department in the hands of a clerk for some months in every year, during which he traveled round the locations in an ox-wagon. With him went the iron treasury chest of the former Batavian Government of the Cape of Good Hope, which had been brought to Natal in 1846. When coins were scarce, Natives paid in cattle. (Hattersley 1940:110)

Trading stores were an integral part of the mechanism which enabled African subsistence farmers in the Locations and Reserves to generate cash money with which to pay this tax. Traders thus facilitated a rapid transition from barter-trade to monetary systems, exchanging customer produce for money which was then used to pay tax. In areas in which other appropriate authoritative structures such as magistracies were non-existent, many stores functioned as Hut Tax collection points.

Historical Studies scholars regard Hut Tax as a strategic mechanism from a number of aspects. Men left their homes to seek paid work rather than rely on the meagre surplus of a subsistence economy to pay tax (Brookes & Hurwitz 1957:73). This coincided with the discovery of gold in Johannesburg at the end of the 1880s and the opening of the mines, creating a migrant culture that

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<sup>64</sup> The administration of Hut Tax characteristically led to the collection of empirical data regarding chiefs and their subjects in each district, found in the Colonial Magistrates Reports.

fragmented rural social and familial systems. Hut Tax was a primary means of locking people into a cash economy, and it changed the role of traders who, as the focus of small communities, became responsible for the families left behind.

Traders remember Hut Tax collection as being a fête day for them and the local people, in the way that pension days are today. With both events, scores of community members flocked to the store and it functioned as a locus for social aggregation. Although Hut Tax eventually became a Poll Tax, the tradition and name perpetuated. Jean Aadnesgaard remembers 'Hut Tax' day at iNtikwe Store whilst she was a child in the 1950s. Sweets, such as 'Zulu Mottoes' were scattered on the grass outside the store for the children and people came from afar for the event. As the store straddled tribal wards, the collection was conducted over two days in which the Dhlomo chief paid tax on the one day, and the Khanyile chief the next.

- **The development of systems of exchange**

The payment of tax in cattle was cumbersome. However, the lack of coin money was not restricted to rural areas and Locations. In the towns barter was the primary form of exchange, partly due to the lack of available coinage and partly because the types of goods traded determined reciprocal exchange rather than purchase. Although theoretically the British system of coinage had always been legal tender, it became rare and locally inappropriate. There were limited vehicles for importation of coinage and large distances between colonial centres, meaning that coin money did not officially exist in the new colony. This was exacerbated towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when a dearth of coinage prompted the issue of tokens and 'Good-Fors'. For decades, such promissory notes scrawled onto convenient pieces of paper were used to honour transactions. Despite the emergence of local banks at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the monetary system took years to standardize.

Indeed, this early lack of coin is possibly tied to the origins of the credit system practiced by many larger stores. The generation of economic goodwill through the extension of credit to customers reinforced the purchase of loyalty by the

trader.<sup>65</sup> Customers were, however, bought in other ways. Due to the lack of money some rural traders minted their own coinage which was redeemable only at their stores. This worked in areas in which a single trading family owned a number of stores and the coins could be spent at any of their enterprises. Donald Strachan opened an early trading concern at Umzimkhulu in Southern Natal, which grew into a trading empire. 'Strachan and Co' minted perforated tokens designed to hang around the customer's neck, and embossed with their name. In this way the traders resolved the problem of lack of coinage and at the same time literally bought customer loyalty.

Despite a gradual increase in the availability of coin money and although officially outlawed, barter continued to be practiced until recent times. Perhaps the most extreme and opportunistic form of barter occurred in Zululand in which the minor gold and silver rushes at Nkandla and Nondweni at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century attracted an influx of settlers. JC Van der Walt wrote that

Prospectors, miners and farmers had no legal obligation to report their gold nuggets or the gold dust produced, to the magistrates in order to pay royalties. Store owners in Zululand gladly accepted gold nuggets and gold dust as legal tender. A bottle of gin was traded for a pennyweight of gold. (Van der Walt 2007:96)

- **The Rinderpest<sup>66</sup>**

In 1897 the bovine disease, Rinderpest, erupted with disastrous consequences in sub-Saharan Africa. By this time, African subsistence farmers in Natal were reasonably well-established and settled on white and African-owned farms and Crown Lands. They were farming effectively, producing saleable surpluses with which they could pay their Hut Tax (Ballard 1986:423).

The Rinderpest followed a devastating locust plague in mid-1896 as well as a drought which severely curtailed food production. Ballard describes the social ramifications of the locust plague and the drought as leading to 'widespread malnutrition, indebtedness, increased labour migrancy and starvation amongst

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<sup>65</sup> Hourwich Reyher criticizes these credit lines, regarding the trader as the generator which forced people to enter into migrant labour rather than the underlying imposition of Hut Tax; 'Since cash was almost unknown in a remote rural area, the natives ran up debts and came into the storekeeper's power, they were forced to go to the mines, for which he was recruiting, and to pay an exorbitant interest rate on the debt contracted' (Hourwich Reyher 1999 [1948]:36).

<sup>66</sup> 'The Rinderpest' colloquially refers to the event in 1897.

women, children and the elderly', suggesting that these events made subsistence farmers more vulnerable when it came to dealing with Rinderpest (Ibid:430). Contemporary Magistrates' Reports reinforce this, noting the increased dependence of people on traders due to lack of crops and livestock.

The cultural, economic and social lives of the Zulu were focused on cattle-keeping, so they were particularly hard hit with extraordinary cattle losses. The literal death of their wealth, in addition to the drastic reduction of available meat and milk prompted increased trade and reliance on trader-provided foodstuffs. Moreover, from a cultural perspective the culling of large cattle herds affected the African farmer materially. A dire shortage of cattle for *lobola*<sup>67</sup> cut deeply into the very fabric of their social, economic and political systems.

Initially Rinderpest was reported in current-day Tanzania, after which it moved south, hovering on the Natal-Transvaal and Natal-Orange Free State borders for some time before entering the Natal Colony. Officials worked hard to mitigate the spread of the disease, developing serums and vaccinations and restricting the movement of animals. It must be remembered that during this period oxen and cattle were primary sources of transport, and inhibiting their movement was complicated. Despite the trans-Colonial railway being largely constructed, far-flung areas were still accessible only by transport riders and their large spans of oxen, which became the primary vectors for the spread of the disease (Ibid:422).

The effects of Rinderpest were predictably politicized. White farmers inoculated their cattle and were protected to some extent by the Colonial Government, whereas African people regarded Rinderpest as being imported by the whites. They were thus obstructive in complying with regulations restricting the movement of cattle, or vaccinating their animals.

The authorities, ironically, benefited. John Knight, the Resident Magistrate at Nqutu, noted in the 1898 Blue Book for Native Affairs that 'Before referring to details, I wish to state that the plague (Rinderpest) has been the means of

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<sup>67</sup> A bride price in cattle paid to the father of the bride.



furnishing data upon which to calculate horned cattle, which I never possessed before.' Under the heading 'Trade and Barter', he notes:

I have heard at least two (storekeepers) say that since rinderpest, native trade has been better than it ever was before. Assuming this to be correct, the reason would probably be found in the fact that the natives are spending money at the stores which they formerly spent on cattle. (Blue Book for Native Affairs 1898:C24)

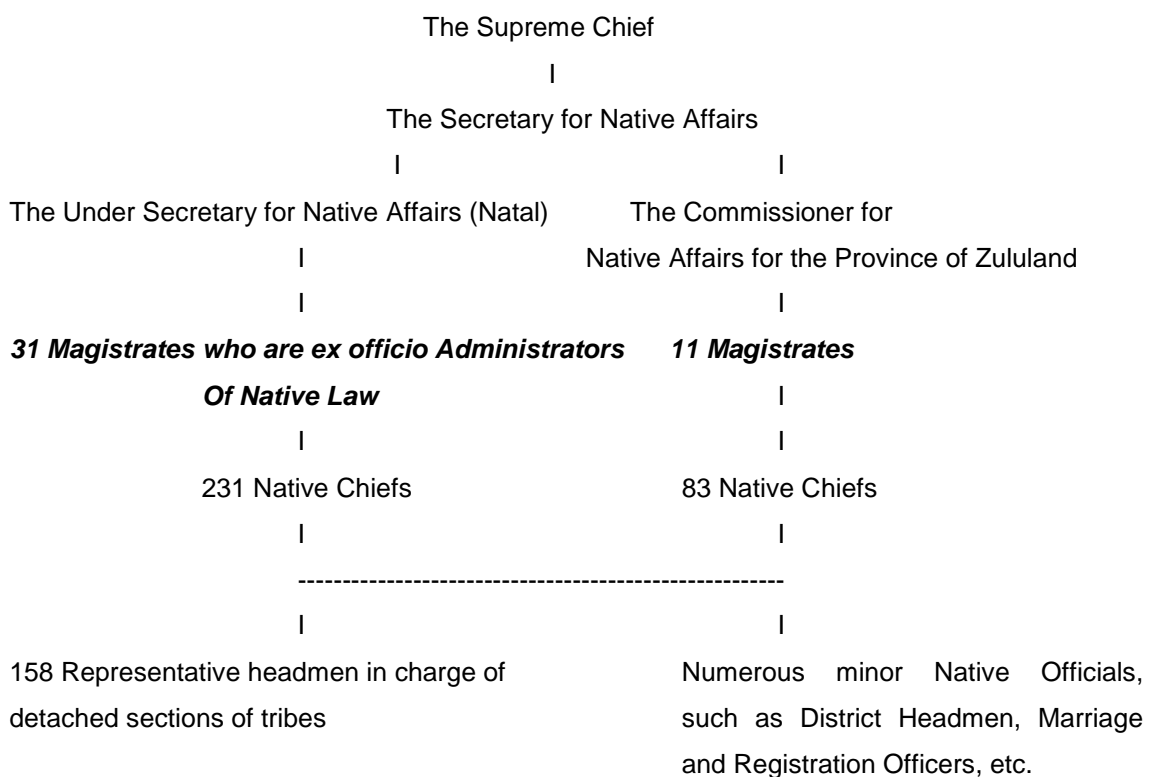
Knight continues by advocating that African people should open savings accounts to provide for 'rainy days' such as the effects of Rinderpest. With the sanction of some local people, he had already £100 entrusted to him. In the same volume, Magistrate Addison in Nkandla recorded a decrease in the sale of ploughs, due to the lack of ploughing oxen (Ibid :C28).

Rinderpest had far-reaching consequences for the entire sub-Saharan region, and its effects had a profound impact on early 20<sup>th</sup> century farming, industry and legislation. For the purposes of this study, the Rinderpest is critical as it heralds the beginning of a reliance of African people on traders, rather than on profit accumulated through the production of surplus. This factor added to the extant shift in power relations, and prepared the ground for the arrival of many other traders in Zululand after 1905.

East Coast Fever, another cattle disease, hit Natal in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century causing similar tragedy. The magistrates and Native Commissioners were important conduits of information between authority and blacks living in remoter regions, and more often than not, had to be the bearers of bad news. Braatvedt recalled such incidents in the Empangweni area near Estcourt where he was stationed just before the declaration of Union in 1910. He was with the Stock Inspector when people with infected cattle were informed that their cattle would be shot, although due compensation would be paid. One old woman was so distressed by this news that she was prepared to die with her cattle rather than watch her herd being shot. Braatvedt, a fluent Zulu linguist, sat down and calmly explained the matter to her. He said, 'I still consider that incident one of the best jobs I have ever done' (Braatvedt 1949:51).

- **The role of the magistrate**

Magistrate Braatvedt worked at the coal face of the official structures. The lowest rung of colonial administration in a district was the magistrate's office, manned by petty officials who fulfilled a mediatory role between the people in their division and government imperative. The operations of the magistrate formed another layer in the social lattice in which the trading store was situated. Often it is their voices, as external critics, that reflected on traders and their dealings, captured in their annual reports of their magistracy. The magistrate occupied a middling tier in the hierarchy of the colonial and provincial administration, which operated thus.



(Blue Book for Native Affairs 1905:ii)

Magistrates worked as intercessors between chiefs and their subjects and the higher echelons of the Department of Native Affairs. They were vital components of the well-oiled cog that formed the British Empire, in which devolving responsibility trickled down from the Queen or King of the Empire. As the lowest form of official, they were directly responsible for the dissemination of information, policy and propaganda to the people in their district.

Originally, one of the requisite qualities for appointment as a magistrate or Native Commissioner in Colonial Natal was familiarity with the Zulu language and Zulu culture, thus many people who grew up in trading and farming or those from missionary families entered the civil service. Braatvedt<sup>68</sup> notes:

When I joined the Civil Service in 1905 the Natal Government lay great stress on a knowledge of the Zulu language by every public servant whose duties brought him into contact with the Natives; and required all candidates to pass an examination conducted by a Board of three examiners. A very high standard was set necessitating a three-hour paper on Zulu grammar, and translations from legal documents, Government notices, etc., as well as a Zulu essay on various Native customs.'...Looking through the records of the old Natal magistrates and higher officials in the Department of Native Affairs, it will be found that practically all commenced their public service as Zulu interpreters. (Braatvedt 1949:25-6)<sup>69</sup>

Some magistrates and Native Commissioners wrote memoirs relating events of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Few people from this period are still alive, but texts provide a coherent, un-constructed view of their worlds which, couched in the rhetoric of their time, provides a lens through which relationships between the authorities and the magistrates, the traders and Africans, can be viewed. Some tell of enduring relationships with local people, and bemoan the way in which officials were manipulated by the Department of Native Affairs to implement gradually severer legislations as the machine of apartheid began to move. When the Afrikaner-supported Nationalist Government gained power in 1948, Shaun Johnson as biographer writes:

Segregation had been in place for centuries, but this<sup>70</sup> would take it to a new and, in his view, flammable level. How, he asked himself, could one manage fairly and honourably the interface of the races in such deteriorating atmosphere? (Johnson 2006:64)

Not all writings were personal. By definition, magistrates were inveterate information collectors and their annual reports, the Blue Books, provide a comprehensive repository of subjective information exposing their view of events. Colonial records are noted for their precision with numbers, which ultimately served to support tax collection, whether hut, dog, trading or poll.

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<sup>68</sup> Braatvedt was known to the Zulus as 'Mqangabodwe', 'The tall one' (Braatvedt 1949:27).

<sup>69</sup> The ethnographer Henri Junod (1927) supports Braatvedt. Working well into the Union Period after the withdrawal of this ruling, he insisted that Native Commissioners' lives would have been smoother were they versed in the ethnography of the tribe amongst whom they worked.

<sup>70</sup> Nationalist government Group Areas Policy

## **2.2 The context of the vernacular architectural response**

This section serves to contextualize the later discussion of vernacular architecture. As noted previously, the first stores were vernacular in style, employing a variety of materials and idioms. These were altered, partly through prosperity and partly through promulgation of law, which forced traders to modernize their stores at the end of the 1940s.

The magistrates, missionaries and traders all established formal residences, offices, churches and stores once they had arrived at their allotted post. The architectural record of these buildings is a material vestige of the social stories, of establishment, prosperity and inclusion. Mission stations and magistracies by their nature were more monumental, advertising the power of God or the power of authority. In time, trading stores came to represent the power of wealth and money, but their origin and development was usually much more modest.

It must be remembered that the early traders were neither architects nor builders. Most turned to trade in order to survive, and they had few economic resources for the construction of elaborate buildings. This meant that the construction of trading stores was usually most utilitarian and rudimentary, and initially many were built by local blacks in their indigenous vernacular, as evidenced by descriptions, drawings and photographs. Sometimes the store was constructed using indigenous technologies which were adapted to settler needs. Geology, geography and climate played a large part in determining the material construction of stone, wattle-and-daub, or woven reeds. If the economic position of the particular store owner was stronger, corrugated iron sheeting could be imported by wagon for roofing instead of thatch.<sup>71</sup> The span of the rafters and trusses and thus the size of the building were largely determined by immediately available timber reserves, which if non-existent had to be imported from elsewhere. Once they were established, white settlers relied largely on their preconceived ideas of style and building, transposing urban and remembered architectures onto a new landscape.

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<sup>71</sup> Many of these buildings were originally thatched, and later re-roofed with corrugated iron.

Like any form of architectural vernacular, the materials used limited the scale of the structures both vertically and horizontally. The plan form largely dictated the height and mass that the vertical structure would take. Even at the apex of their trade, few formally constructed stores in rural areas ever reached more than a single story. The scale of the early buildings often followed an understood Victorian settler aesthetic, and the commensurate ‘tool-kit’ of detail such as vertically proportioned windows and doors would be employed. There was very little recourse to the typical decoration of the time such as timber fretwork or cast-iron work, reinforcing the functional nature of the buildings in their rural settings.<sup>72</sup> In the light of the strong iconic language that the later Modernist stores were to develop, these early stores had no prevailing architectural theme except for perhaps, a veranda.



**Figure 2.1: The old homestead at Vumanhlamvu (Photo: Author November 2006). The buildings are elongated rondawels. Note the steel windows characteristic of the Modernist buildings. These were possibly inserted at a later date.**

The vernacular response was sometimes very primitive indeed. Old traders talk of ‘roughing it’. Hazel Ueckerman says that when they moved to Hlabisa they lived in a ramshackle *rondawel*, (discussed further) for months. When they moved to trade in Nongoma, the hardship continued with the family living in the chemist’s shop next door. Florence Bateman speaks of her father,

‘In 1929 Geoffrey Sutton’s daughter married my father Louis Calverley’s. Sutton was an Australian saddler who came out to Greytown and then to Qudeni. He first bought the store at Masenkomo in 1910 where he traded and lived on the side of a mountain in a cave until they got the store at iNtikwe. The rent for the lot was 10/- an acre. The first three years were free.’

<sup>72</sup> These embellishments, could, however, be found on Churches and Magistracies.

Florence and Barry Bateman had their turn of hardship when as a young married couple they bought the Dlolwana Store. Arriving along the dirt track to take up occupancy, they found their new enterprise in flames. The seller had set it alight upon leaving. For the first few months of trading, the Batemans ran the store from a shed and lived behind the counter.

The buildings on the site formed part of an evolving, organic system: as early as 1904, documentation of buildings demolished and constructed, as well as a heterogeneous composition of structures, suggests inveterate and constant changes and improvements. William Owen trading at the Upper Umhlatuzi Store at Nkandla, itemized his assets in the Zululand Lands Delimitation Commission Report (1905) as consisting of,

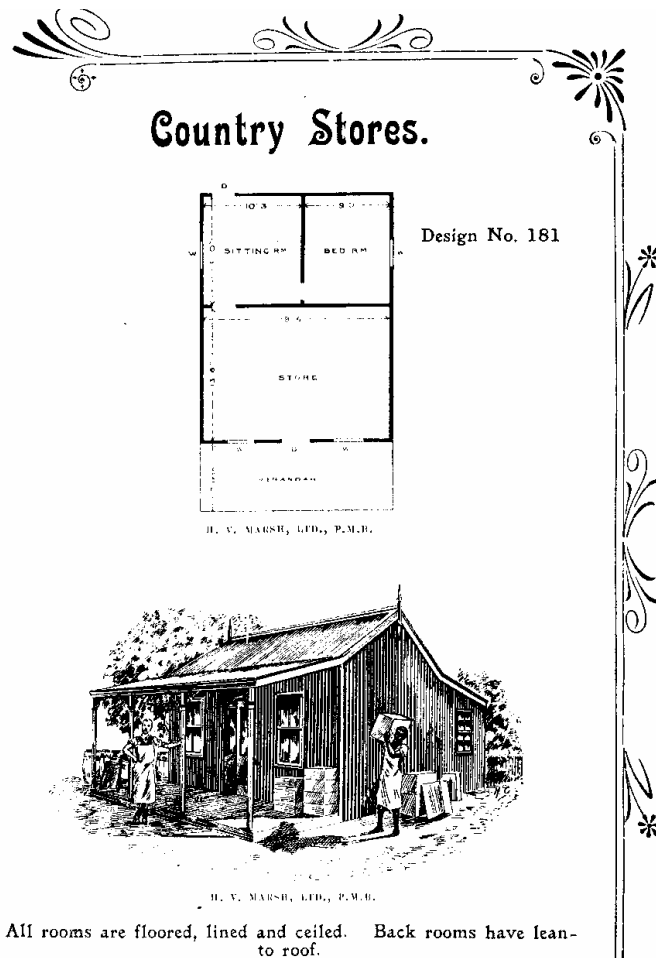
A brick house, 30ftx20ft for the accommodation of travelers, A brick kitchen 12ftx16ft, a brick dairy and two round houses, with thatched roofs, and a large stone-walled cattle kraal... two stables have been taken down, as they were built of rough wood slabs, with thatch roof, and in place of them brick, with iron roofs, have been erected. A native store, of brick, has been added to the end of the store, 18ftx16ft. (ZLDC:210)

Similarly, iNtingwe Store near Qudeni was described by its owner Elias Titlestad as comprising a wood-and-iron building which had 'some' brick added to it, and a new trading store of brick with a corrugated-iron roof. There was a note to say that the old store had been demolished but had formed part of his purchase. The 'dwelling house, built of brick, cement plastered, iron roof and verandah',<sup>73</sup> had been erected by Titlestad, and there were a variety of outbuildings which were not specified in terms of their construction, except for the workshop which was brick under corrugated iron (Ibid:207). Even as late as the 1940s, there was often little alternative and recourse was made to the most fundamental of shelters; Hazel Ueckerman's three ramshackle *rondawels* at Hlabisa are a case in point. An important colonial solution to accommodation in remote areas was the wood-and-iron building. Of the 'country stores', most included a bedroom. This technology was so successful that their legislated demolition at the end of the 1940s was felt keenly, as Roy Rutherford bemoaned with his reconstruction of all their northern stores. Often, like the Baig Store at Impendle,

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<sup>73</sup> The prestige attached to brick buildings in the testimonies of the ZLDC is evident.

a new modern store was constructed, and the family merely relocated to live in the old wood-and-iron store.



**Figure 2.2. One of five different catalogue wood-and-iron and 'country' store options offered by the Pietermaritzburg-based HV Marsh (Marsh 1915).**

Constructing in the vernacular was largely pragmatic when rapid construction meant speedy commencement of trade. However, as the above evidence by Owen and Titlestad suggests, vernacular solutions are influenced by social situations. Whilst many early buildings may have been wattle-and-daub or *rondawels*, when the economic situation of the trader changed these were upgraded to more socially acceptable structures. This coincided with the 1950's 'modernizing' of the store, partly prompted by legislation, and partly by changed means. It is important to extend the vernacular discourse at this point to include these, since it is this architectural style that created the iconography of the trading store style. This phenomenon dovetails with Margot Winer's previously described 'Architecture of Affluence', a century-and-a-half after its manifestation on the Cape Eastern Frontier.



**Figure 2.3: Old store of mixed construction, Durban (Photograph undated: provided by Arthur Gammage eThekweni Metropolitan Council)**

The grand Modernist architecture of Europe and America took some time to reach South Africa. Noted architectural historian Ronald Lewcock explains:

By the mid 1950's we were aware of New Empiricism and Le Corbusier's work at Ronchamp and La Tourette, and Barrie (Biermann) and I, at least, thought of Modernism as style, and were aware that architecture was moving on. By then Le Corbusier had built a number of projects using local building traditions, and Hassan Fathy was in the *Architectural Review*. As historians and theorists, we both felt that the local South African environment was important for the direction of future architecture in the country – as were South African architectural traditions. (Lewcock, cited by Sanders 2005:315-321)

Many stores built after 1920 had the potential to change their proportions and scale, given the greater availability and affordability of Portland cement. Other newly affordable materials such as reinforced concrete and steel meant that buildings could be constructed with larger roof spans. Besides altering the massing of the building and creating more monumental structures compared with their vernacular precedents, what the use of reinforced concrete and steel achieved was to alter the proportions of openings. Fenestration, particularly, moved from a vertical format common to sash and casement windows, to a horizontal format informed by standard steel mass produced sections. This meant that larger openings which let in more daylight could be achieved. Locating the high level 'ribbon' windows characteristic of Modernism close to the roof allowed more room for shelves on the internal walls. As paradigm shifts usually happen slowly, the adaptation of these new materials to the construction of buildings in a Modernist horizontal format as opposed to the vertical formats



of the Victorian and Edwardian periods, took time. It must be emphasized that until relatively recently these stores were too remote to justify the importation of these luxury materials, as they were considered then.

A turning point was Natal Ordinance No 30 of 1947 which introduced necessary 'modernization' that legislated, to some degree, for the construction of new buildings. Where stores were deemed unworthy or hazardous, larger window openings were to be introduced into buildings of substantial or monolithic construction, sometimes entailing smashing the walls with a sledgehammer to increase the wall-to-window ratio. This law required plans to be submitted to authorities. Importantly, Clause 35 states:

At or over the principal entrance to any premises in respect of which a license to carry on any trade...has been issued, there shall be conspicuously displayed the style or firm-name under which such trade is being carried on, and if such style or firm-name consists of or contains any name in addition other than the usual name or names of the person or the partner in any partnership to whom such license was issued, then the name of that person, or in the case of any partnership the names of the three senior principal partners named in the license, or if all the partners hold equal shares, the names of three of them.

Accommodating this was usually carried out by constructing a parapet wall,<sup>74</sup> a feature which became one of the most enduring indicators of the 'trading store'.



**Fig 2.4: Vumanhlanvu Store, near Nkandla- archetypal example of the modernist form – note the parapet wall (Photo: Author 2006)**

<sup>74</sup> Old stores and those with hipped or ridge roofs instead of mono-pitches often erected a sign above the main entrance, in effect creating a parapet.

Architecturally speaking, these new trading stores thus filled many of the tenets of Modernism - Louis Sullivan's dictum 'Form Follows Function' underpins the ethos of the planning. The principles submitted by Le Corbusier namely minimalist decoration, planar surfaces, (often) white walls, ribbon windows, and linear forms, together with a mono-pitch roof at a shallow fall presenting a clean-cut box, are complied with. Except for brick, there is no evidence of locally produced materials such as thatch, stone or earth. There is no decoration and no richness in texture. They are honest buildings, a quality which would have satisfied Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. As the prevailing architectural style of police stations, administration blocks and other accommodations of the organs of the apartheid government,<sup>75</sup> Modernism has other connotations, yet it is primarily these stores that set the template for the contemporary *spaza* shops.

However, the application of the term 'Modernism' can be taken one step further. 'Vernacular modernism' as a descriptor for these stores constructed particularly as a result of the legislation in 1947 is appropriate in the light of the comments of Nazar AlSayyad, who notes that 'Epistemologically...the *meaning* of the vernacular has to change...that the vernacular in some may in fact be the most modern of the modern' (AlSayyad 2006:xvii). Given the parameters within which architecture is formed, following the definition offered by Oliver (see page 22) it would seem appropriate that officially sanctioned legislations describing materials to be used are constraints in the production of the vernacular, in the same way that culture and landscape offer their levels of control determining material, form and arrangement. Whereas vernacular architecture is normally situated together with history and the past, allowing for an extension of the parameters situates vernacular architecture firmly in the present.

Modernism is not the grand 'International Style' in Zululand. Rather it is restricted for a niche section of function. Marshall Sahlins uses the phrase 'Indigenized', but in KwaZulu-Natal Modernism has been appropriated in the creation of a 'cultural niche,' or as Marcel Vellinga suggests, 'vernacularized'

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<sup>75</sup> Hart and Winter speak of the appropriation of buildings in the 'Cape Dutch' genre by Afrikaner nationalists as symbols of supremacy in the 1950s and 1960s (Hart & Winter in Buchli & Lucas 2001:85). Suzanne Preston Blier cites Foucault (1973:207) regarding the connotations of structures with oppression and political systems in the chapter 'Vernacular Architecture' (Blier 2006:237).

(Vellinga 2006:87). Thus, from the discussion above, it can be seen that the trading stores and their progeny, as metaphor and structure, are contemporary architectural vernaculars which are situated in the present. Rapoport's 'Rule Systems' can act as a generator in the production of vernacular, and these rule systems were inherent in the legislations which culminated in the 1947 Ordinance (Rapoport 2006:194).

### **2.3 Conclusion**

This chapter served to construct a basic background for the reader, highlighting salient points in the history of Natal and Zululand in order to tease out those events and external role players which were significant in the lives of the traders. Its intention was to explain the arrival and reciprocal position of the early traders, and to begin to track their changing relationships with their customers, leading up to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the period covered by this research.

The establishment of Port Natal as a trading post at the outset was described and a brief overview of the manner in which the traders dealt with the Zulu Kings specifically, valorizes the importance of these early trade links. Events that situated trade and gave it credence such as the demarcation of the Locations and Reserves partly as vehicles for trade are discussed. The symbiotic relations with missionaries who were similarly positioned, the gradual development of a monied economy despite the fact that there was no money and those factors such as the Hut Tax and the Rinderpest which precipitated African subsistence farmers into this situation are enumerated. Finally, the connection with the built form, the material evidence of the settlement of the traders is discussed. This presents important background information on the settler and Modernist vernacular that developed in Natal between 1850 and 1960, the evolution of which has important ramifications for the current rural landscape in the scores of *spaza* shops that abound and which will be elaborated on in due course.

### Chapter 3: The physical effects of the political community

*I, as a Trader on the boundary with Kwa Zulu do a lot for the Black as no doubt do other Traders. For example I have kept families fed until such time as the husband is able to secure employment. I have transported ill to the Hospital, a fair distance I can assure you. There are a number of ways I have assisted the Black man at my own expense and I am still required by law to meet further expenses. (John Fry, Mtubatuba)*

The allotment of trading sites by government departments performed the task of physically marking out the progress of colonial development. Forming landmark and nodal points in the historical and contemporary landscape, the establishment of the early trading stores usually preceded the arrival of roads and railheads. The traders that operated these stores were marginal, manning the unofficial outstations of colonial and Union period authority. In this liminal space they forged relationships with their customer communities, a familiarity which, at the time, would have been perceived as threatening by the authorities

The Zululand traders were put into place by the law – legislation enabled them, recommended it, and suggested that trading was a wonderful means of ‘civilizing’ the Zulu people. After 1887 and the Colonial annexation of Zululand, many traders established themselves on Crown Land or tribal land which was let to them on a 99-year lease. This was negotiated through the Department of Native Affairs which would liaise with the local chiefs in the allotment of suitable land. These trading sites were ultimately networked across Zululand which gave the authorities points of reference for the dissemination of information, sites of shelter and potential participants in a call for arms. They were not randomly situated institutions, as their placing in the landscape was cognizant and rational, based partly on maximum opportunities for trading as well as the official approval of their applications by the organs of government. Some, such as the Ndumu Group’s Othobothini Store and Stephen Cope’s Keates Drift Store, were sited at critical locations or geographically transient places, such as river crossings. Others were situated at the top of mountain passes or on the edges of Locations and Reserves, both of which were culturally liminal positions. Muzi, Ndumu and Kosi stores, owned for a long time by the Ndumu Group, were located on what was at that time (and still is) an unofficially permeable border with Mozambique. Some were landmarks along rough and muddy tracks. Cyril Ovens described the tarmac road ending at Shakaskraal

Hotel that one either had to have a couple of beers to celebrate ending the dirt, or a couple of beers to mourn the start of the dirt (Ovens 1999:4)

Trading has never provided a totally stable environment. City dwellers have fixed access to freehold land which is 'owned' and is not usually subject to the whims of authoritative change. Traders have had varieties of experience in justifying their existence to the government which often put them there in the first place. Over the years their positions have been challenged by waves of legislation that aimed to expropriate, redevelop, limit and alter their means of doing business. These laws have had repercussions on their livelihoods.

Chapter 3 intends to deal with the decisions of authority that affected the trading stores and traders. Since these political decisions occurred chronologically, it is appropriate to present this section consecutively.

- **Allocation of the store sites**

Whilst supplementing information on the salient events in the early history of trade in Zululand, it must be reiterated that for many years the attitude of the Colonial Government towards the settlement of the 'Locations and Reserves' was one of 'hands off'. Yet, in the absence of any formality, hunter-traders were quiet colonizers of this space. Brookes and Hurwitz are emphatic that,

Prior to 1887 there could be no question of Reserves in Zululand. Zululand belonged to the Zulus. Nor did the Imperial Government demarcate Reserves during the ten years in which Zululand was ruled as a British Crown Colony. In 1897, however, Zululand was annexed to the Colony of Natal, which had enjoyed responsible government since 1893. (Brookes & Hurwitz 1957:12)

The physical siting of the store and its catchments was important in the attraction of trade. The future of many traders was at the mercy of the official decision makers from the Department of Native Affairs who allocated store sites. Some went to extraordinary lengths in order to improve their allocated lot. Newmarch and Wood applied to the Secretary of Native Affairs to move their store from the Kranskop bank of the Tugela River, situated in Natal, to Middeldrift on the Zululand side. Dated June 21, 1897, they wrote:

We beg to advise that we have lately made arrangements with Mr. Horace Balcombe of Emthombeni to take over, in fact we are now in possession of, his trading stores, one at Krantzkop and the other at Middle Drift, Tugela River and I trust that it will meet with your approval. We find that the site of the store at Middle Drift is not a good one, and that white ants make it almost impossible to erect a good building and keep a really good stock of goods. We find that the bulk of the trade is from the Zululand side of the river. We are desirous of removing the store and the buildings to a site on the Zululand side about 500 yards distant from the present site and as will be seen from the enclosed copy of the enclosed letter from Mr. Knight<sup>76</sup> Rld, Nkandla District, we have obtained the necessary permission. (Secretary for Native Affairs 1118/187 1/1/247)<sup>77</sup>

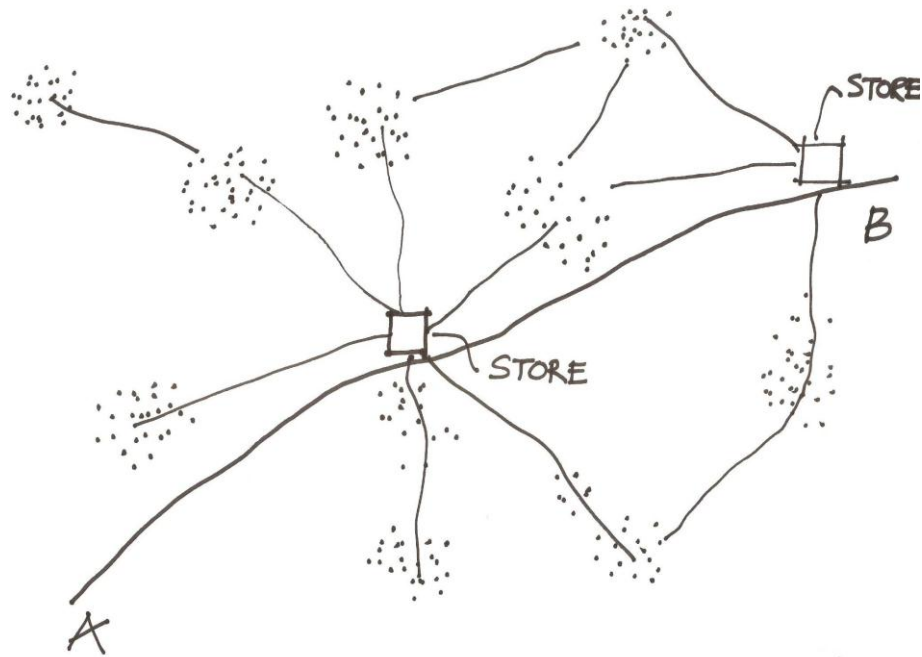
An important feature of the allocation of the store sites mentioned by all the traders was their distance from each other. Legislation dictated a fixed distance of no less than 5 miles between them. Geoff Johnson began an interview by saying that 'trading was lucrative and we were protected, you know. It was protected by the government through the enforced distances between the stores and the restrictions on trade.'

In Figure 3.1 overleaf, a road travels 5 miles between A and B, along which are two stores linked by the road. Between them they are connected to homesteads and communities which themselves are interlinked. Together these physical paths create patterns on the land which connect the monolithic store structures and collect the homesteads in a network of commercial enterprise. Choice of store is made by the customer dependent on requirement, price and relationship.

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<sup>76</sup> Knight was the magistrate in Nkandla at this time.

<sup>77</sup> This application became Middledrift Store at Ndongondwane. This operated until recently when Wilmore, the trader, had a heart attack whilst driving across the low-level Tugela River Bridge. His son took over trade, and was shot dead in the store. This resulted in the Wilmore family leaving the area and the demise of a trading tradition which possibly spanned four generations since Wilmore was trading at Nondweni in 1897 according to the ZLDC. Trade from Zululand was obviously more successful than that in the perhaps over-traded Natal.



**Figure 3.1: Connectivity between stores and exercising the options of choice (Author)**

The imposed net set up by the '5 mile rule' has a more organic precedent. In 1933 Walter Christaller examined the geographical lattice created by the situation of market towns in southern Germany through the generators that created it.<sup>78</sup> The distance between these towns was established through the optimum location of markets, developed over a long period of time and chiefly in an organic fashion. They grew incrementally though supply and demand as a series of economically driven events (Christaller 1966 [1933]).

Unlike the gradually expanding commercial net in the German example, the arrival of the trading stores in the Zululand landscape was relatively instantaneous, planned, and politically organized and administered. Had they all been sited as part of a natural process, the construction of the stores and occupation of sites would have occurred as a series of social, economic and cultural decisions, rather than authoritarian determination.

<sup>78</sup> The translator of the original work, *Die Zentralen Orte in Suddeutschland*, Carlisle W Baskin of Randolph Malcolm College, carried out the work as a result of numerous international requests for translation, one country being South Africa which at the time of publication in the mid-1960s, was engaged in restructuring programmes to separate race groups and marginalize rural poor. With reticence, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walter\\_Christaller](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walter_Christaller) (17/06/08) describes Christaller's service in the Planning and Soil Office under Himmler during World War II.

- **Zululand Lands Delimitation Commission (ZLDC) 1905**

The Zululand Lands Delimitation Commission was a watershed political move that affected settled tribes in Zululand as well as traders and missionaries. The events leading up to justifying its implementation took place over two decades.

Zululand was not stable after the 1879 Anglo-Zulu War. The Battle of Tshaneni (Ghost Mountain) in 1884 was an indication of continued instability and the Colonial government felt the need to further fragment the power of the Zulu king. Thus in 1887 Zululand became a governed territory of Natal with a tenuous security, and a number of stores opened after this law was passed. However peace was not automatic and further agitation in 1888 was political justification for full Colonial take-over. In this time Cetshwayo had died and his son Dinizulu had succeeded him as King of the Zulus. After the 1888 uprising Dinizulu was tried for treason and sent into exile for ten years. He was demoted from King to 'Paramount Chief', a relegation which plagued the Zulu kings until the end of apartheid. In 1897 the need for more land for European settlement in Natal amongst other issues, pushed the Colonial Government further. Act 37 of 1897 declared that 'the Territory of Zululand shall become annexed to and shall thenceforth be a portion of the Colony of Natal, and shall be known as the Province of Zululand.'<sup>79</sup> Thus, officially until just prior to the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Zululand was the domain of the Zulu and the Colonial Government officially had little control over it or access to it.

With Zululand now as a province of Natal, it was agreed that land tenure as it existed would remain intact for a period of five years, including the prohibition on land grants to whites. However, to demarcate boundaries and unlock some of those lands held by the Zulu chiefs for future white settlement, the Zululand

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<sup>79</sup> The Annexation of Zululand was implemented using what the British regarded as 'Indirect Rule', given the precedent set up by the Reserves. Because the Colony was still reeling financially from the Anglo-Zulu War in 1879, a Hut Tax of 14/- was imposed on the Zulu. This took some time to establish as it was only being effectively collected in 1891 (MacKinnon 1990:92). The settled political and economic situation that developed after Annexation led to increased security and productivity (Ibid 1990:60). 'Africans, in general, responded well to the new circumstances with the only means at their disposal. The Reserve territory (of Zululand) held a certain attraction for Africans suffering from the ravages of the (Zulu) civil war. They could maintain homestead production relatively free of large surplus extraction. Migrant labour and external trade links provided a greater return than simple homestead production. Clearly more capital was available through the advantages of the Reserve and more was therefore retained than in the old kingdom' (Ibid:64). Those areas across the Mkuze River and into Maputaland (where the 20<sup>th</sup> century traders Rutherford and Irons traded) were annexed by Natal later, between 1888 and 1895 (Ibid:79).



Lands Delimitation Commission (ZLDC) led by Dartnell and Saunders was constituted, in 1902 and completed its report in 1905. The findings of the Commission ultimately opened up Zululand for agricultural settlement and simultaneously allowed for an influx of new stores. This lengthy survey enumerated the landholdings and assets of all resident traders, squatters and missionaries, who had to declare their tenure and fight for their livelihoods and investments. From a researcher's point of view, this document is invaluable, describing the extent of trading enterprises and settlement, where each trader was located at a point in time and how long they had been trading.

The aim of the ZLDC was to negotiate the boundaries of Reserves for Africans in Zululand using the Natal Locations as reference, and to alienate those lands for white settlement. 'Garden Chiefdoms' were the premise for establishing the Reserves. The resident chief described his understanding of his jurisdiction and boundaries with the Commissioners, which became the basis for negotiation, an intensive community participation process way before its time. The process was lengthy, detailed and complex, and Zululand was still not totally stable. Because of ongoing disturbances, some chiefs were uprooted and returned to find their land reallocated, meaning that some boundaries had to be resurveyed.

The Commissioners were sensitive to the rights of the residents of Zululand, despite their brief to identify exclusionary lands for settlement. Dartnell and Saunders recognized the tenuous situation of the traders in particular, noting:

The only rights acquired by any of these storekeepers are, that they have been given permission to establish their stores and carry on business under the usual annual license with the right to graze up to one hundred head of stock. It is now a question for Government to decide what further rights will be granted to these, and all other storekeepers in Zululand, situated in a similar position. (ZLDC 1905 Prelim Report:2)

They continued by suggesting a remedial measure; that townships should be laid out at the seat of each magisterial district immediately. This would enable those storekeepers within the boundaries of already declared townships and in the proximity to the magistracy to be able to gain proper title to the land. They regarded this action as dispensing of the 'rights of a considerable number of

storekeepers', suggesting that other mechanisms be employed to mollify those storekeepers in rural areas and Reserves far from the magisterial seat.

In establishing the extent of the area for white settlement, established missionaries, traders and squatters had to submit their case, as primary white residents in Zululand. Faced with the flimsy legality of their 99-year lease this official challenge goaded the solitary lives of the Zululand traders into action. Those whose stores fell within the area identified by Dartnell and Saunders for Reserve settlement had particularly tenuous occupancy, and they had to defend their investments quite aggressively. At Magogo Store, later run by Dee and Ian Hay, William Owen stated

I paid £250 for the Magogo Store, and have expended £40 in improvements. This store was burnt down during the war by the Boers. I received compensation. I am at present using a native square house as a store, by permission of the Magistrate, Nqutu, until such time as I can rebuild my old premises. (ZLDC 1905:207)

Storekeepers were specific about their needs. Pearse, trading in the Mahlabathini district, defended his position by writing:

..in conclusion, I may state that in laying out my money in buildings and improvements in this place, it has always been my hope to be able, when the time came, to purchase the land around the stand. The trade with the Natives in these out of the way places, without the assistance of cattle running and mealie grounds, is not sufficient to maintain a family in the way they should live before the Natives. (ZLDC 1905:246).

His store had been established before the annexation of Zululand. His inventory of his assets included three wood-and-iron rooms 12" x12" costing £100 as well as a thatched stone-walled room, a storeroom, a bedroom, a wagon room and a cow shed (ZLDC 1905:246).

John Fry describes the store that he had established at Impapala. He concluded, should the Commission not recommend he be given an option to lease or buy, that 'This comes rather hard on me, after being a resident of Zululand for over twenty years. If anything could be done in order to help me in this matter, I would be thankful' (ZLDC 1905:259).

In his defence, William Calverley from 'Insuzi Store' stated in 1904 that he had 'been 16 years in the Nkandhla District', arriving during the gold rush of 1888 as a prospector. He then established a store at Sibhudeni and sold it. Having worked cutting telegraph poles and bridle paths, as Gaoler and Court Messenger at Nkandla, he then took over the iNsuzi Store. During the Anglo-Boer War, he commanded a 'Zulu *impi*, who were to guard the Zululand Border against Boer invasion.'

This trading stand was established in or about 1886, and I purchased the building and stand from Messers. Fry and Oxborrow, in 1896 for £350, and have since erected buildings and improvements to value of, say £550, and tree planting, wattle and gums, of about 4 to 5 acres, and about two acres of fruit trees. (ZLDC 1905:211)

Calverley wanted to pipe water to the store but he declared that he was reticent to do so, if he was going to lose the store as the result of an unfavourable decision of the ZLDC (ZLDC 1905:211).<sup>80</sup>

The trials of the traders during the ZLDC were compounded by recession. This was worse in the Mahlabathini Division. Magistrate Stainbank reported the effect of the East Coast Fever epidemic and said that all the storekeepers were complaining about the slow and small sales. The magistrate reasoned this was due to high prices brought on by lack of stock. Transportation of goods was limited because of the quarantine of oxen and cattle as a result of East Coast Fever (Blue Book of Native Affairs 1905:97). Moreover, the greater fiscus was affected. During the initial period of the ZLDC investigations, the Anglo-Boer War was coming to an end and reparations had to be paid.

During the politically tenuous period between 1887 and the completion of the ZLDC in 1905, the majority of stores in Zululand had been established. By 1898 there were 103 European stores and one Native-owned store throughout the Zululand Magistracies (Blue Book of Native Affairs 1898:C6). Traders now formed a viable sector of the Zululand economy.

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<sup>80</sup> Contemporary farmers such as Keith Morrison with land 'under claim' are similarly reticent to plant a new season's crops if their investment is going to be expropriated or destroyed by fire.

- **The traders and the Bambatha Rebellion**

The aforementioned premeditation, specifically siting the trading stores according to the mechanism of the '5 mile rule' resulted in a net being extended across Zululand with points of contact and surveillance for the authorities.

During the Bambatha Rebellion the colonial authorities made full use of this lattice. A note in the 1905 Blue Book was to have dramatic consequences: item 10(a) of the Poll Tax Act of 1905 states: 'As regards the tax payable by Natives, the tax shall be collected by the Magistrates of the several divisions.' Clause 10(b) made provision for the magistrate to liaise with the chiefs and headmen, to arrange dates and places for the collection of this tax.

All Chiefs, Official Witnesses, Headmen and Kraalheads shall assist the collectors in this collection of the Tax from Natives under their charge, and shall carry out lawful instructions and requests of the Collectors. (Blue Book for Native Affairs 1905:175)

The Poll Tax Act had lasting effects, culminating in the Bambatha Rebellion the following year.

'You know my grandfather Calverley cut off Bambatha's head?' <sup>81</sup> declares Jean Aadnesgaard showing me a document closely written and overwritten in the style of Leonardo da Vinci. 'He didn't have that much paper you know.' The contemporary family history of the Calverley family is imbued with a legend which, today, is not something to publicize. The 1906 Bambatha Rebellion, an uprising led by a petty chief named Bambatha Zondi at Mpanza close to where Stephen Cope trades at Keates Drift, was the result of economic crisis.

Most African subsistence farmers in Zululand did not recover from the cataclysmic Rinderpest in 1897 and renewed outbreaks of East Coast Fever. The Natal Colony was reeling from the above disasters in addition to having to contribute to the costs of rebuilding the colonial infrastructure after the Anglo-Boer War ended in 1902. This prompted further increases in the Poll Tax<sup>82</sup> on top of drought and a heavy snow the winter before.

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<sup>81</sup> To this day, many people believe that Bambatha escaped to Swaziland or Mozambique.

<sup>82</sup> Ironically, Poll Tax affected all men regardless of race.

The skirmishes moved quickly across the Tugela River into Zululand ultimately taking place in the dense forest around Mome and Nkandla where William Calverley was trading. As part of a complex social fabric, like their predecessors at Ndondakusuka, the traders had to tread careful paths between the needs and loyalty to their customers and their 'ultimate' allegiance, the Natal Government.

Calverley had bought his first store in Nkandla in 1895 and had been trading for a decade by the time the Rebellion broke out. He had been involved in the regiment of the Zululand Mounted Rifles<sup>83</sup> (ZMR) as a Sergeant Scout, and as a result of this was awarded the 100 acre trading site at iNsuze.<sup>84</sup> Florence Bateman and Jean Aadnesgaard separately tell the story of their grandfather rescuing Zulu women in the iNsuze bush during the Bambatha Rebellion. Because the ZMR patrol was tracking down Bambatha and his men they were instructed to kill everyone they came across, on the assumption that as blacks they would be allies. William Calverley and his scouts were traveling on horseback along a narrow track through the forest when they heard children crying. Both granddaughters agree that Calverley was caught in the conundrum of dual allegiance. His customers trusted him and he trusted his customers; they were mutually reliant. However, his cultural and political affiliations meant that he had to actively participate in any call to arms by the Colonial Government. Dismounting, Calverley picked his way through the thick bush to investigate. There were no insurgents hiding in the bush, rather women and children who came from the community in which he traded. He urged them to run, to return home, for if they remained hiding in the forest they would be killed.

The official value of the trading stores in Zululand forming part of a greater reconnaissance system became clear on discovering a military map produced at the time of the Bambatha Rebellion (See Figure 3.2). This document connects stores, towns and magistracies, itemizing what are perceived as allies in the effort to suppress Bambatha Zondi and his supporters. The participation of the storekeepers at the time is well recorded in the skirmish at Thring's Post and Owen's Cutting, both later operated by Calverley descendents. As physical landmarks operated by whites they were considered suitable for billeting

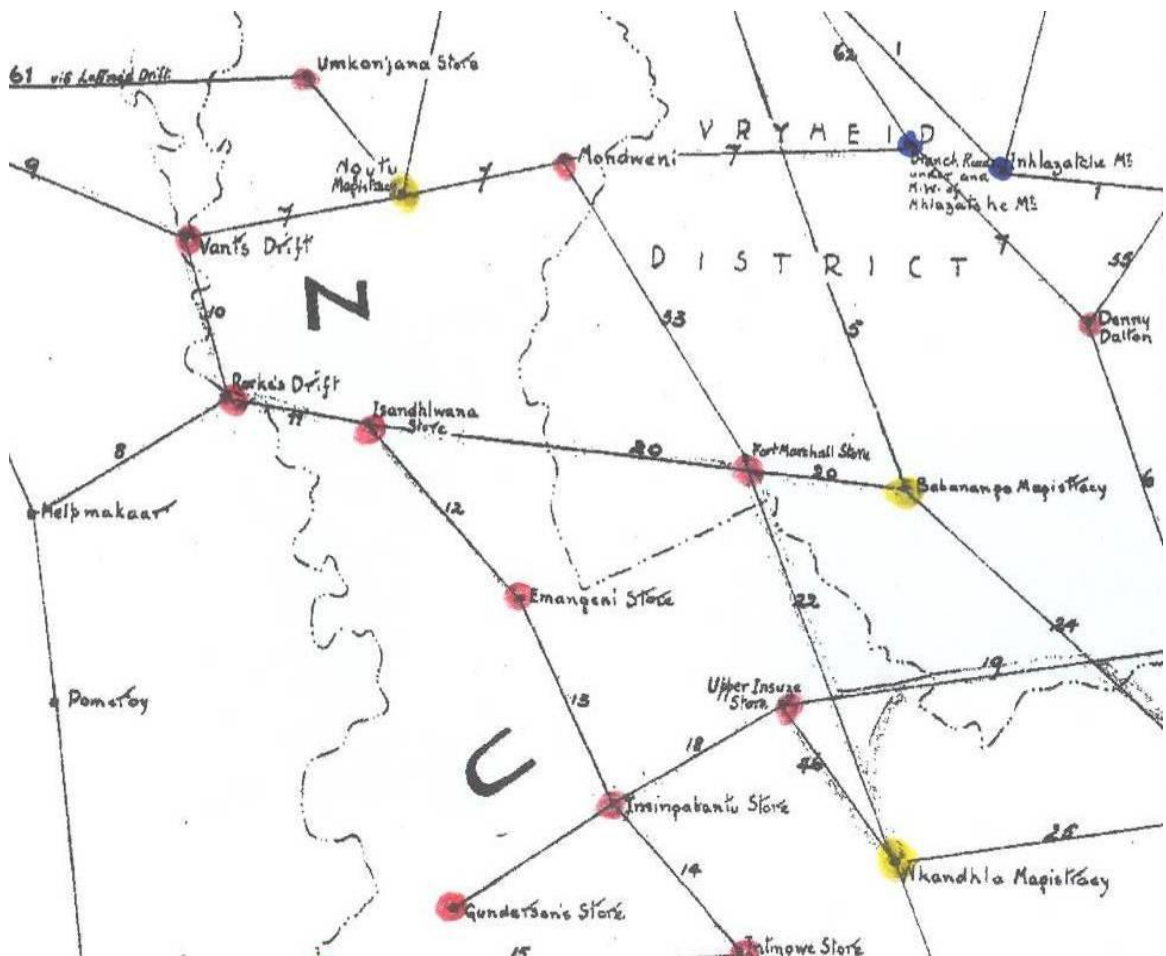
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<sup>83</sup> ZMR was raised in 1904, joined Umvoti Mounted Rifles at Union, and closed in 1913.

<sup>84</sup> In 1898 William Calverley was trading at 'Upper Nsuzze' in this region (ZLDC 1905:211).

officers. Although the Colonial officials may have considered them allies, for the Zulu at this time they were strongholds representative of the evils of Poll Tax.

This lattice work as perceived and presented by the Colonial government, describes a considered view of a landscape which officially was not operated and governed directly. Rather it was 'self-governing' through the 'Indirect Rule' system of chiefs and their *iNdunas*, who were ultimately answerable to the Secretary for Native Affairs. Areas of strategic value, magistracies, mountains and stores were points of reference in an otherwise relatively featureless map.



**Figure 3.2 Section of military map showing the distribution of places of colonial control in Zululand January 1906 during the Bambatha Rebellion: Stores in red and magistracies in yellow (Provincial Archives Repository M2/469).**

Maps such as this describe a different landscape, one which is constructed to inform and distribute real or perceived power. John Allen dismisses in part the catholic immersion of power as a constant, and suggests instead that,

Power...is a relational effect of social interaction. It may bridge the gap between here and there, but only through a succession of mediated relations or through the establishment of a simultaneous presence. People are placed by power, but they experience it first hand through

the rhythms and relationships of particular places, not as some pre-packaged force from afar and not as a ubiquitous presence. (Allen 2003:2).

This statement reinforces the non-arbitrary nature of these networks. Ultimately, trading stores were not considered as constant beacons of connectivity, but more as a physical set of points which were activated once a 'call to arms' was received. When required, the trader and his family would operate within the contrived authoritarian structure in a manner appropriate to the situation. This would return to the quotidian power relations between trader and customer once the alarm was over. Nevertheless, the authorities must have been comforted in the knowledge that a net of allies manned all strategic points in Zululand.

- **The declaration of Union and evolving legislations**

Unlike their Cape Eastern Frontier counterparts, few such bellicose events affected traders in Zululand. Locally, traders were subject to other disruptions. Legislations through the decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century enabled, disrupted and disabled trade. In 1910, Natal Colony grudgingly joined the rest of the colonial territories to form what was known as the Union of South Africa. This removed most governmental authority from the new province to Pretoria, which became the administrative capital. Natal Colony had produced many laws and contributed some of these ordinances to the new Union, particularly those relating to the formation of Reserves and Locations. The post-Union period was thus characterized by the promulgation of other legislations intended to consolidate the new country and legitimize this 'Union'. Notably the new Government wrote laws restricting the operation of Indian traders as well as some of the early acts later forming the suite of legislation known as apartheid.

Compared with its colonial origin, Union administration became more authoritarian and paid less attention to the workings of communities and the vertical dissemination of information. The plethora of trading sites that were sanctioned by the authorities through the Department of Native Affairs during both the Colonial and the early Union period formed a working conduit for the transfer of official policy, information, control and collection through to the people on the land. Given the hierarchy between the Chief Native Affairs Commissioner who allocated and collected the rental of trading sites, through

the mediatory *umbilicus* of the magistrates, traders on the ground passed on intelligence and information to their community. In this way they acted as a vital bridge between officialdom and its interpretation.<sup>85</sup>

Magistrates thus straddled the world of instruction and the world of interpretation, and they were feeling the effects of the changed dispensation keenly. Many were reticent to explain and implement the new laws and operational standards that were now being handed down by 'Pretoria' which they felt was out of touch with the people. Magistrate Braatvedt was reprimanded by his now distant Head Office for not banking the tax he had collected on the Makhathini Flats locally. No bank existed. He describes the changed conditions with his new, direct manager at Nongoma.

Work was accomplished under the most difficult conditions. My communications to the supervising Magistrate were generally ignored. Even my pay voucher never reached me before the middle or the end of the following month. In fact, I suffered many indignities at the hands of the Nongoma officials. (Braatvedt 1949:69)

The dismissive spirit that characterized the post-Union civil service appeared to be entrenching itself locally, whereas Braatvedt cherished the relationship that he as the magistrate had with his communities. Trained in the empathetic ways of the Natal Colonial Government he became increasingly critical of the heavy-handed manner with which the Union Government was approaching people and land. In seminal words written in 1949 he slated the opening up of large tracts of land in the Pongola valley for European settlement:

Is it worthwhile? The valley can never be a successful European settlement, owing to the intense summer heat and the presence of Malaria which cannot be effectively controlled....surely there are other parts of the Union where large, healthy settlements can be established? What is it proposed to do with the thousands of Natives who will have to be removed from Crown Land? It must be remembered that these people were never conquered, but sought the protection of the British Crown of their own accord....The removal of the Natives will create a first class national problem, with far reaching repercussions. (Braatvedt 1949:102)

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<sup>85</sup> See Chapter 2 for a discussion on the situation of the magistrate in the official hierarchy.



His words came true. Ironically, Braatvedt was only echoing similar reservations expressed by Dartnell and Saunders in their *Final Report of the Zululand Lands Delimitation Commission*, in which they observed:

Can Natal honestly dispossess Natives of their lands that they have held from time immemorial? Will the tribes quietly submit to be moved to make room for the whites? It must be borne in mind that quite half of the Zulus are as susceptible to fever as Europeans. To move whole tribes from healthy districts to unhealthy ones will mean practical extinction. (ZLDC 1905:276)

Generally speaking, the legislations affecting traders after Union were reasonably benign. From the Colonial period, Natal had in place the 1898 License and Stamp Act (Natal) No 43 which was repealed and amended by Ordinance No 5 of 1913. This merely introduced semantic alterations in the definition, now referring to 'Union'. A later Ordinance No 4 (1923) had the intention of amending the laws relating to the granting of licenses to wholesale and retail dealers in rural districts. Clause 4 of this legislation provided for the establishment of Rural Licensing Boards, as well as an 'administrator' to split or combine areas of jurisdiction, and allowed for the alteration of district boundaries. There is evidence of the oft quoted 'five mile law' in this legislation. Clause 16 says,

Any person resident within the area of the Board, or within five miles from the premises sought to be licensed, or owning or occupying similarly licensed premises within the same distance, or any officer or member of a Police Force, may lodge objections and oppose any license on compliance with the rules in that behalf.

Clause 17 of Ordinance No 4 (1923) had an effect that was more material. Ursula Morrison says that 'all the early stores were wood-and-iron with the house tacked on the back,' much like Lake Store at Makakatana. This legislation made provision for stricter and more enforced controls.

The Board may in authorizing a license direct it to be suspended for the erection or completion of buildings according to approved plans, with any modifications that may be authorized, or pending the execution of repairs or of any necessary alterations in the existing premises.

The ramifications of this were comparatively important. Building plans now formed part of the annual trading license application which, if rejected, would be

held in abeyance for a year. Taxation reared its ugly head, regulating the keeping of proper books or records in the English or Dutch language. With reference to Zululand, Clause 25 noted that,

The territory known as the Province of Zululand shall be excluded from the operation of this Ordinance in so far as it relates to Licensing Boards, references to which in other parts of this Ordinance shall accordingly be construed in relation to the existing licensing authorities. The Administrator may, however, by proclamation bring any part of Zululand not included in the Native Reserves under the operation of the clauses of the Ordinance relating to Licensing Boards, and upon the taking effect of such proclamation Licensing Boards shall be substituted for the pre-existing licensing authorities in the district so proclaimed.

Six years later this omission was resolved with the 'Rural Dealers' (Zululand) Licensing Ordinance 1929' which made provision for the establishment of Rural Licensing Boards in Zululand. A later Ordinance 14 (1935) gave powers to local authorities to lodge objections if they felt that the operation of a store would negatively impact on property values and quality of life. The Board had more powers vested in it, in that it was now able to judge whether there were too many businesses carrying on similar trade, and it was allowed to restrict or limit the terms of the application of licenses. All extra administrative work was moderately irritating, and traders learned to live with these legislations.

Traders had a temporary respite during World War II. Clause 4 of Ordinance 10 of 1941 relaxed some of the trading restrictions and license applications if the main license holder was serving abroad.

Ironically, given the above grandiose gesture, the most damaging of these legislations was one that was promulgated at the same time, whilst many traders were serving in Europe and their wives were running the stores. Ordinance 19 of 1942 removed the Rural Licensing Boards established under the 1923 legislation and created new ones. Magistrates hereafter constituted one of the three members of the Board and served as Chair. If the third person making up the trio was a trader, he was not allowed to make decisions on trade in the area in which he had an interest. The powers vested in this new Board were greater. Clause 19 was particularly weighty, in which application for licenses had to be made to the authorities operating in the area in which trade

was being carried out and any renewal of license had to be applied for **after** 15<sup>th</sup> November in any year, and **before** the 31<sup>st</sup> December, for it to be considered 'renewal of license' and not 'new application'. From the 16<sup>th</sup> onwards, December is the busiest time of year for most traders. In rural areas many families depend on migrant menfolk, who return at Christmas with cash. Added administration of license renewal was inappropriately timed.<sup>86</sup>

In addition, closer official scrutiny formed part of the new application and renewal process. Clause 21 of this Ordinance makes provision for inspection, objection and opinion by the health authorities, amongst others, on the matter of license applications. Clause (a) states that,

..the licensing authority is satisfied that the premises are suitable for the purposes of the trade which it is proposed to carry on, whether as regards their character, structurally or otherwise, or their situation, sanitation or ventilation, or the accommodation provided for employees.

Shadows of the later 1947 legislations began to emerge. No license would be granted to a building which was half-built or not in a fit state for trade, although the Licensing Board could allow a conditional certificate should plans and sections of the intended building be submitted. Again the traders gritted their teeth and carried on.

In 1942, Jack Irons and his wife Hazel Ueckerman moved to Hlabisa with their young son David, who was just two. Both were working in Durban and had been married for a scant two years by the time the war started. Irons had tried to enlist, but was turned down as he suffered badly with ulcers. Tiring of the taunts they decided to leave the city and moved to Hlabisa at which Irons' brother George was trading. Hazel Ueckerman recollects that this store was one of the old wood-and-iron ones. Once at Hlabisa they had to borrow money to acquire the store site and to buy a car. They found their accommodation to be dire, consisting of three derelict *rondawels* with no bathroom and no kitchen. They

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<sup>86</sup> Despite the onerous application process for a license, the requirements for annual renewal gave traders flexibility and mobility. Many people moved around to suit their situation and others merely 'gave trading a try'. If it was not lucrative or the lifestyle did not suit them then they had an escape route. Thus there were many traders, like the Plomers, who only traded for a short period, whilst others that needed to supplement their income from missionary work and farming could apply when a local lease came on offer. Jean Aadnesgaard, Geoff Johnson, Florence Bateman and Bob and Hazel Ueckerman all started trading this way.

had to cover the window openings with sacking. Ueckerman remembers clearly that the three huts were joined together with 45 pieces of iron, which were flattened-out paraffin tins, and recalls that the family lived in one ramshackle *rondawel* for six months whilst the others were being fixed. That, she says, was the point at which she realized the limits of reasonable resilience of a human being. Hlabisa at this time was a difficult place in which to live. Many trading families relied on the store allotment for supplementing their food stocks, 'but here' she says,

'There was absolutely no natural way of getting food. Local people did not grow crops as the ground made for really bad farming, so not only could they not buy in fresh goods from the community they could not produce them themselves. Customers in Hlabisa depended almost solely on the trading store for their goods.'

Eventually, they were forced to buy some cows for milk and a few chickens. Ueckerman says that 'it was the queerest place you can imagine'. The description of this ramshackle accommodation set against the specificity of the quality of buildings set out in Clause 21 of the 1942 Ordinance suggests a large schism between what was real and experienced by traders and customers, and what was a dictatorial message from a detached administrator.

A chance comment by Ursula Morrison informed an important trajectory in the research. She said, that 'the stores had to be pulled down and rebuilt, you know? And split into two halves, one for Africans, and one for Europeans.' This comment led to the scrutiny of the different layers of legislation to establish the effects that this authoritative intervention had on the traders, if any. Morrison remembered this law as being somewhere in the late 1940s, but the specific date, nature of the legislation and the context was not recalled. For Ursula Morrison, it was a story oft told, which through the telling ended up in her mind being a *mélange* of different pieces of legislation.

Morrison had conflated two separate issues. The first was a legislated rebuilding in order to separate race groups. The first Group Areas Act no 41 of 1950 was national legislation, as opposed to the provincial Ordinances that had affected trade in Natal up until this point. Stores that served numbers of both black and white customers had to split, dividing the floor space to enable two

separate stores to service the different race groups. Stores which served predominantly black or predominantly white customers could remain. For the Morrisons, Nyalazi Store was affected as it was on the railway line and served both groups. Lake Store at Makakatana did not serve many Europeans and so was never altered, although access to the house behind, common in the old stores, was sealed in accordance with the 1942 law.



**Figure 3.3: Nyalazi Store (Author 2008)**

Their 'new' store at the rail siding at Nyalazi, a large and rather elegant example of Modernism, was built in the two legally determined sections. It still operates today, with one side a glorified *spaza* shop, and the other a storeroom. The promulgation of the first of the controversial Group Areas Acts in 1950 was the beginning of a swath of laws which affected people materially and socially. In remote areas the growing apartheid social groundswell was not noticed by the traders, but the separation of the stores was, as it defined race in spatial terms.

Where European customers were prevalent, we had to build separate stores for whites and blacks in those days. Now the only one that really affected us was Mkuze. There we had a Bantu store around the back of the building which still stands today. (Rutherford 2000:56)

The second issue reiterated by Morrison resulted from Ordinance No 30 of 1947. This affected traders who had to construct new stores now that their existing ones were considered 'sub-standard'. This Ordinance was forceful, with its stated intention that 'most' authorities were allowed free and reasonable

access for inspection purposes. It firmly reinforced the Five Mile Law, and Clause 4 (Section A) described the approval process. 'The regulation and control of the construction of new buildings and the alteration, re-construction or repair of existing buildings in which any trade is proposed to be carried on' meant that the submission of plans and full approval had to be achieved by the licensing authority, who would hold back a license if refused. A new one could be applied for in the following calendar year.

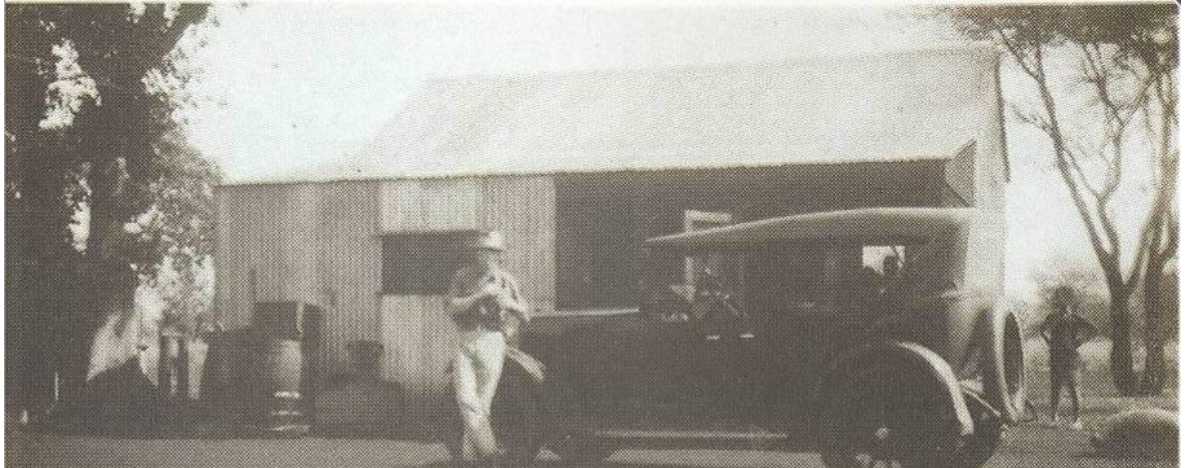
In this law the health authorities make a grand entrance. Ordinance 30 was promulgated with the rider that the authority could refuse the annual application on the grounds of improper or inappropriate locality, inadequate protection against vermin and flies, fire provisions, and a threatening personal clause which stated, 'the applicant is not a fit and proper person to hold a license of the class in respect of which the application is made, whether by reason of the uncleanness of his habits or methods, or for any other reason'. These clauses meant that many stores were not legal. Traders had to rebuild, and these new stores were constructed in a fashionable Modernist architectural style which was cheap and used stock materials.

Roy Rutherfoord took over the running of the extensive Ndumu Group holdings on the Makhathini Flats after his father's death. Rutherfoord's monograph corroborates the Ordinance, finding it agonizing, and elaborates:

A new law had come out that wood-and-iron stores were no longer permissible. They had to be of brick or concrete block and there had to be a certain amount of window space to floor space. (Rutherfoord 2000:54)

Most of the stores belonging to the Ndumu Group consisted of wood-and-iron. However, Rutherfoord's conundrum was that in the sandveld of Maputaland, wood-and-iron was the only practical structural system. These stores were far away from any formal source of building materials, and there was little water available for building. The major problem was founding the structure in what was effectively a massive sand dune. Given the nature of the prefabricated materials, wood-and-iron worked well for years, whereas monolithic concrete construction was structurally problematic. 'The only material we had plenty of down there was sand' (Rutherfoord 2000:54). He says:

Virtually every other store had to be rebuilt. Ndumu was a concrete building but it had to have additional windows and being a solid concrete building it was very difficult to open up with a hammer and chisel in those days... Now we had no stone in the area, the nearest stone in those days being in Durban. Stone was a costly item, especially in those days with the transport costs. So what we did was to dig the foundations very deep and then get some of the hollow blocks and fill them to turn them into solid blocks. We laid four solid blocks and then three and made a pyramid effect of them. The two came up to the floor level and then the walls went up. This is how all the stores in sand country were rebuilt and they are still standing there today with hardly a crack. (Ibid:55).



**Figure 3.4: Mlambongwenya Store, with RH Rutherfoord in front (Rutherfoord 2000)**

Ordinance 30 made provision for refusal if it was adjudicated that 'the public' would not benefit from the store or its site. Decisions were felt to be very random, and construed in a paradigm apparent only to the authority. However, it was this legislation that was primarily responsible for the flotilla of Modernist trading stores from the 1950's onwards. The toolkit of parapet wall, ribbon windows and veranda was to prevail, creating an iconic style that carried with it the 'idea' of trade. It was these store buildings that provided the pattern from which the *spaza* shops today are cut.

- **The observations of the Tomlinson Commission**

Although many of the early legislations of the Union Government were the forerunners of apartheid it was only from 1948 onwards that the intentions became entrenched. The creation of policy was necessary in order to fulfill the intentions of separate development and to do this it had to re-establish itself through a number of commissions that sought to re-examine the position of the 'Native' in the social and economic structure of the land. The Union Government (which it still legally was) called for an official investigation into the 'Socio-Economic Development of the Bantu Areas' in the early 1950s. This was in part to substantiate the development of the first Group Areas Act of 1950.<sup>87</sup> The 'Tomlinson Report',<sup>88</sup> as the outcome of this investigation is known, integrated history and ethnography into its text, using these results to substantiate its goal. Ultimately, it aimed at restructuring spatial aspects of African society across the country, releasing land for agriculture through the creation of denser settlements which were known as 'Betterment Areas' and 'Irrigation Schemes'. Simultaneously the findings of the Tomlinson Report provided justification for the official stance of 'separate development'. The Tomlinson Report explains clearly the manner in which manipulation of social and cultural practice was used to political ends, and gives a clear indication of general practices of stores and their customers at the time.

This was a seminal document, perhaps more important at this social and political juncture than the controversial Group Areas Act. It explains the rationale behind the creation of apartheid society, and simultaneously presents a wholly new generic ethnography that totally ignored the multiplex cultural society that comprised the national ethnic landscape. It conflated all the major African language groups under one vast umbrella using the term 'Bantu', which was set in opposition to 'European', meaning white, rather than of European origin, entrenching the society of the 'other' (UG61/1955:50-51). The same assumption which assimilated the vastly varied national language groups and practices into one single mass, used localized cultural notions such as the Central Cattle Pattern, as suggested by Evers (1988), as a given for all Southern African ethnic groups (UG61/1955:14).

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<sup>87</sup> The first Act No 41 of 1950 was repeatedly amended until full implementation in the 1960s.

<sup>88</sup> The full title of the document is '*Summary of the Report of the Commission for the Socio-Economic Development of the Bantu Areas within the Union of South Africa.*'



The importance of the role that traders had played as gatekeepers and facilitators was not underestimated by the Tomlinson Commission. It recognized that traders in rural areas were concurrently important and loaded with potential in the implementation of the new ideas. Chapter 22 is dedicated to the topic of traders and trading. As a rule, the Tomlinson Commission felt that:

The general dealer holds an important position in the Bantu Areas. He is the principal “importer” of factory-made goods for sale in the reserves, and is frequently the chief “exporter” of goods produced in his area, besides functioning as middleman in local trade. Especially when he is a European, he often acts as advisor in family, tribal or legal matters and occupies a position of trust. (UG61/1955:90)

The now codified trader is seen to be critical in the redistribution of local produce by providing a market for those goods. The most important relationship is of course, between trader and customer. This balance was negotiated in part. There were considerable pressures on the trader, whether white or black, to keep up with the demands of his customers. Article 14 notes the need for a variety of goods to be provided, and the need for items of quality within this variety. It describes the importance of the ‘integrity and personality of the trader’, and patience in that adequate time was needed to make purchases (UG61/1955:91). In commentary which discussed the changing material cultures of the African people, traders are obliquely referred to:

The most obvious results of contact are the outwardly observable ones and these include changes which have occurred in the consumer needs of the Bantu. These changes are particularly evident in regard to clothing, nutrition, housing, implements and domestic appliances. (UG61/1955:90)

It is vital to reiterate that the Tomlinson Commission was assessing the situation in the whole of South Africa, motivated largely by the need to justify the settlement of Locations and Reserves as ‘Bantu’ territory. At the same time it identified and expanded upon industries within the Locations and Reserves, later used to justify limiting black people’s need to travel outside of them. It is to be noted that the Tomlinson Report deals with black traders as much as those of European extraction. They note lack of capacity and illiteracy as being stumbling blocks with some black traders, and that white traders were perceived as having preferential relationships with wholesalers.

- **Apartheid period restrictions on trade**

Despite the constructs reinforced by the Tomlinson Commission, many people have forgotten apartheid or have started to see it in oversimplified terms. In this void, Jimmy Morrison's collection of letters and documents provide valuable insight into governmental machinations of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, and they voice how these controls were perceived by the so-called privileged sector. His service on the Zululand Development Administration Board was in part used as a platform to address the implementation of increasingly restrictive legislation locally. During this period many of his letters were pitched in protest: the continued policing of employees and tenants by the authorities and restrictions on all variety of relationships was met with amazement and scorn. He was particularly vocal on issues concerning the legislated racial composition of his workers and who was allowed to live on the property. Registration of African staff with the Department of Bantu Affairs was mandatory, intended to limit their mobility and to enforce the absolute minimum of African people living in areas which were scheduled as 'white.' Not only did he disagree with this in principle, having known his customers and staff for many years, but he was irked by the administration that this caused.

Having to register staff and pay for the process annoyed John Fry from Mtubatuba. A letter written to the Natal Bantu Board in 1979 indicates his self-perceived role as a trader amongst the community in which he worked. He expands acerbically, waxing lyrical about the conduct of an Afrikaans civil servant who, he considered, had the attitude of a 'Dictator',<sup>89</sup>

There are a number of points, in terms of the Act, that I object to...The first is that I have a child of 13 years of age who assists on a Saturday morning in the packing of customers' purchases. I was informed that I would have to Register her. I would like to tell you that I do not need this assistance but by employing her on a part time basis am in actual fact educating her. Her parents are both pensioners and as such are unable to afford her education. Because of my compassion towards a child who wants to be educated and have the opportunity, later in life, to lead a better life than her parents, I am required to register her. No, Sir, I feel that this must be looked at in depth. The second is that I have premises for my employees that I would have no trouble in renting to a white. They have hot and cold showers, water born toilet, and somewhere for washing to be done. To have these passed in order to qualify for a reduction in fees I will

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<sup>89</sup> The syntax and spelling is as recorded from the typed letter.

have to produce plans....surely an inspection by your Department will confirm that they are suitable and as such qualify for a reduction in Registration fees....I am a registered Farmer and as such have merely to divulge the number of units I employ and pay 40c per unit, apart from my top permanent employees. Furthermore your Department will actually come to me in order to register my farm employees but not my Store employees. This seems awfully 'cockeyed' to me....Bearing in mind, the difference in cost of registration paid by the Trader as compared with the Farmer, would you kindly enlighten me as to the reason for registration. Is it to control the movement of Blacks in White areas or is it to swell the coffers in order to assist the Homelands? I am most interested. (John Fry, Letter in the Morrison Letters)

Apartheid affected white people too. Conscription was a contentious obligation that all white male South Africans faced. During his two years of full-time military service, Hugh Morrison fought in Angola. This stint had short follow-up 'camps'. Jimmy Morrison wrote to Commandant Nicholas Goldstone in December 1986, requesting deferral from a camp for Hugh on the grounds that,

December is by far the busiest time of the year for us and his services are urgently required in the shop. Furthermore, we are moving to new and much larger premises during January/February and one of the reasons for his appointment was to assist me in this major and difficult task. (Jimmy Morrison to Nicholas Goldstone: letter in the Morrison Letters)

- **The formalization of Zululand in 1977**

Implementing the Group Areas Act on a large scale resulted in the creation of the homelands and the formation of KwaZulu. The flimsy legality of the 99-year lease finally returned in 1977 to haunt the Zululand traders. Many leases were reaching the end of their agreement, and the reality of the government canceling these leases was legitimate. Simultaneously, a major change in dispensation facilitated the aggressive implementation of the Group Areas Acts to create the Bantu Homelands, of which Zululand formed part. New legislation for the formation of KwaZulu<sup>90</sup> restricted white ownership in these areas and sought to implement the idea of 'Separate Development.' Although some traders such as Johnson managed to hold on to their businesses, Stores owned by white traders were expropriated by the new KwaZulu Government and handed over to black applicants. Most of these businesses operated briefly, before closing down due to lack of official mentoring and support. This was the death knell of years of trade. These expropriations resonate with Dartnell and

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<sup>90</sup> The KwaZulu Legislative Assembly was established by Proclamation No. R70 (1972) and KwaZulu was declared a self-governing territory by Proclamation No. R11(1977)

Saunders and the ZLDC, although here the idea was not to open up land for white occupation, but to extend the available land for black settlement.

'I have heard that Pat Goss<sup>91</sup> is the only white to have lodged a successful land claim', I say to Geoff Johnson and his sister Dee. Amazed, Johnson says 'I told you that we should have put in a claim for the farms!' The Johnson family's few small farms in Zululand were expropriated in the 1970s. 'How did you manage to keep your store?' I ask. 'I dug my heels in and refused to go', he says. The Aadnesgaards lost Qudeni Store and Vant's Drift Store was expropriated and handed to new owners with scant training or institutional support. 'Why did you stop trading?' I ask Jean Aadnesgaard. She tells of removal.

"Well, you know in 1977 the KwaZulu Government cancelled all the 99-year leases. We had warning that this was going to happen and so from the late '60s onwards we squirreled away all the money that we made. We paid for this farm in 7 years. The stores then were handed over to the KFC<sup>92</sup> and then they got handed over to Africans. Qudeni Store lasted a year'

Mrs. Webb gave up her Ntambanana<sup>93</sup> Store to the Bantu Investment Corporation.<sup>94</sup> The inventory, written in Afrikaans in November 1975 is chillingly reminiscent of the 1905 ZLDC. The asset register notes the store as below.

WINKEL

(store)

Mure van klip 21" breed, binne afgepleister met sement en afgewit.

Houtduere, Staalvensters, masonite platfon, sementvloer. Stoorkamer aangebou aan winkel, 6"sementblok stene, nie gepleister nie. Staandak van sink oor hele gebou. (goed)

*(walls of stone 21 inches thick plastered inside with cement and lime washed, wooden doors, steel windows, 'Masonite' ceiling. Store room adjoining store, 6 inch cement blocks unplastered, ridged roof of corrugated sheeting over whole structure in good condition).* (Provincial Archives Repository – Dept. of Development Administration Archives: DDA 621 (9)N2/7/3/23)

The document enumerated dams, boreholes, fencing, storerooms, rainwater tanks, and produce consisting of pineapples, pawpaw trees, bananas, guavas, peaches, avocados, granadillas and 137 blue gum trees (*Eucalyptus* sp).<sup>95</sup>

<sup>91</sup> Pat Goss, a renowned Transkei trader is now a business partner of Peter Rutherford's.

<sup>92</sup> KwaZulu Finance Corporation.

<sup>93</sup> Near Empangeni, Ntambanana was settled by returning soldiers after World War I. It is bad farmland being in a nagana/tsetse fly area. These farms and the store were expropriated in the 1970s to resettle the Mandlazini people from Reserve VI near Richards Bay to comply with the Group Areas Acts allowing for forced removals (Minnaar 1992:30).

<sup>94</sup> BIC preceded KwaZulu Finance Corporation. It was an investment intermediary for KwaZulu.

- **The effects of new laws for the deregulation of trade**

More recent legislation has had perhaps the most lasting effect. Geoff Johnson emphasizes that 'Opening up of trade in the late 1980s destroyed the business of the trading stores.' Willias Mlambo who bought many of the Ndumu Group stores supports him, adding that 'The stores are closing, because before you had to get a permit from the government to buy goods at a wholesaler and now just anybody can go and buy at a wholesaler.' Most of the legislations which had been promulgated over the years regulating traders and preventing the operation of *spazas* were repealed by the Development Aid Laws Amendment Act of 1988. This legislation allowed people to run businesses out of their houses and legalized *spaza* shops (Tager 1988:9). Opening up access to the wholesalers for the public made it difficult for the trader to offer competitive prices since the trader in turn was being stocked by the wholesalers. Wholesalers could sell directly to the now legal *spaza* shops which drastically diminished the economic edge that the traders had. Many people interviewed have complained that *spaza* shops took away their business. 'How can you compete when there are 100 *spaza* shops between yourself and the next trader?' says an African trader near Pomeroy.

Louise Tager refers to the combined legislations that existed previously as an impossible wall of 'socio-economic apartheid'. Although specific types of retail trade were one of the few enterprises that Africans were allowed to undertake, the lack of available trading sites and the cumbersome process of acquiring one meant that 'backstreet' tuck shops had mushroomed well before the deregulation legislation was passed (Ibid:6). Those who were not materially affected supported deregulation (Ibid:8).

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<sup>95</sup> These were possibly for poles, but may have been planted to drain low-lying marsh in which mosquitoes breed.

- **Contemporary political challenges faced by traders**

Not only white traders feel the pinch of the government. Alan and I meet Willias Mlambo on the bridge at Jozini. He has just bought a new Ford Ranger and is dressed in scuffed shoes and old clothes. He does speak English but he prefers to communicate in Zulu, which means that Alan does most of the talking. Mlambo is at Jozini busy renovating the Othobothini Store as he wants to sell it. This was one of the Ndumu Group stores, important in that for many years it provided the only crossing point across the Pongola River. However, the river has since been dammed and today the Othobothini Store is situated on the northern bank of the Pongola River close to the Jozini Dam wall. Mlambo tells his story, saying that he started working for the Rutherfoords in 1970 at Mkuze, and spent time at Mlambongwenya Store as well as Sihangwane. He began work in the kitchen and eventually became a manager, responsible for checking all the stores belonging to the Ndumu Group. As he did not drive, he was dropped off at a store by the company 'van'. Here he spent a couple of weeks doing all the checks until it returned to collect him. He would be ferried to the next store and be left for a similar period. He worked as a relief storekeeper if a manager happened to go on holiday.

We ask Mlambo how it was that he came to buy a number of stores in the last days of the apartheid government and at a time when the KwaZulu Homeland was fighting for federation status. Rutherfoord, Mlambo remembers, was worried about the political outcomes at the end of the 1980s and did not want to be burdened unnecessarily with the smaller stores, deciding rather to concentrate on the large central ones. At first the arrangement was that Mlambo would run the stores paying a nominal rent to Peter Rutherfoord. He was to sell all the stock in the store during the lease period and then restock the store himself. After a year, Mlambo purchased a couple of the businesses. With the original 99-year leases on these stores coming to an end, and a tenuous situation regarding the future of whites living in the area, Rutherfoord felt it was a better option to pare down his interests.

One of the stores that Mlambo purchased is Kosi Store. This is located on what was a very bad road, rendering the operation distant, impractical and unprofitable. He let it out. To his chagrin, the road has since been tarred and the

area that the store is in has changed fortunes, located as it is within a popular part of the recently declared iSmangiliso Wetland World Heritage Park.

Despite seeming economic independence, Mlambo is still held to ransom by the authorities. All property in rural areas is owned by the Ingonyama Trust, effectively the Zulu King. Peter Rutherfoord sold Mlambo the improvements on the land, but it was up to Mlambo to take the next legal step. The original store owners would have dealt with the Secretary for Native Affairs, but in different times Mlambo has a singular challenge of having to apply to the Ingonyama Trust, the legal owner of the land, for a 'Permission to Occupy' (PTO) certificate. He had to apply for a trading permit, which he notes doesn't seem to limit him in terms of stock or trading hours. However, he expresses severe reservations of a future change in government altering the ownership on the land and thus his ability to trade, since his tenure is currently reliant on the Ingonyama Trust remaining in control of tribal land. This is contingent on the maintenance of the political *status quo*: the tenuous balance between the Zulu King Goodwill Zwelethini, Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi of the Inkatha Freedom Party and the civil service currently administered by the ruling African National Congress. Mlambo worries that should the landholdings of the Ingonyama Trust move from Zulu nationalists to the African National Congress, his ownership vested in the PTO will be null-and-void.

He is not alone in his concerns. Many of the old Zululand traders were aware that the end of the 99-year lease was coming up and they invested their savings in Natal in which as whites, they were allowed to live. Many bought farms, moving seamlessly between the two different lives of trading and farming. Even though these farms are registered in secure tenure, since 1998 many have been subject to another wave of claims on their land; those lodged under the Restitution Act of 1994.

Maureen Ndlela and I are with Jimmy Morrison's son Keith waiting on a wind and rubbish-swept plain for the 'community' to arrive. This is where the local pension payouts occur and eventually, the ferocity of the wind is far too great and we take shelter inside the ramshackle structure constructed for people to wait in their monthly queue. It is poorly constructed, built of concrete block with

gaps in the wall, intended or otherwise. These holes are probably quite a blessing in summer, but allow the bitter July wind right through. The corrugated roof flaps. The 'community' arrives. We sit with the landowners representing corporate forestry and sugar who are willing to broker settlements in the absence of any information from the officials of the Land Claims Commission. The 'community' sits on the thin plank bench with their backs against the wall, in a line of about 20 people. We sit opposite them in similar fashion.

After a frenzied introduction in which numerous old men clamber over the planked benches to greet Maureen, we begin discussion. The group represents claimants who lodged a land claim, and non-claimants who didn't lodge a claim, but still want land. One old man noted right at the outset 'We are glad to see Mr. Morrison here, as he comes from here, he is one of us and he knows everything'. Keith Morrison does not trade like his father and grandfather but he does grow sugar in the area in which he was born. His enterprise forms part of Monzi Estates, a Co-operative growing sugar on the Umfolozi River, ironically the very place that RH Rutherford lost all of his cane to the floods in 1918. Morrison has not left the place he was born or the community he grew up with. Predictably, the meeting ends in an impasse: the central link is the government - the Regional Land Claims Commission. They have not attended the meeting, not replied to any correspondence from the claimants or the farmers, nor given any real support in terms of conflict resolution. The consequences of this inaction are costly; that night 'the community' set 38 co-ordinated fires in the timber plantations under claim.

Dawn Irons relates her experience attending hearings relating to the later proposed, and eventually aborted, Land Expropriation Bill hearings in Pongola.

'Pongola', she says, 'actually belongs to Swaziland. They want it back and it's in the World Court. Pongola was settled by European farmers as a buffer between the Ndwandwe and the Swazi, but it has been farmed so well that they want it back. It's in the World Court!'

She reiterates with amazement.

"But anyway, this meeting is with Lionel Mtshali and he was so aggressive. All they did was laugh at us. There were the Africans on one side saying 'the land is ours', and the white farmers



on the other side defending their land. It was just like *apartheid* except more angry. So I ask about the orphanage and its status as a Trust with regards to expropriation. I say that it is money from all over the world, from contacts I have made and that the children are African children and Mtshali says 'its foreign money, we do not want foreign money we do not need foreign money'. I was spitting mad. All the men walked out and left it for us women to discuss. So a neighbour of mine is married to a White House Senator, and she met Nelson Mandela at the White House and he said to her, 'I can see you are a South African girl living in America. When are you coming back to help in your country?' So this is what she did, came back here and started a Trust farm in the Mkuze community. Now Nelson Mandela asks her to come and help in her home country and she does, and then Lionel Mtshali says 'Go Back to America'. That is the last meeting of that type that I am attending.'

A month later this Bill was removed from the parliamentary process on the grounds of being unconstitutional. By then it had caused great unhappiness.

Stephen Cope talks about land claims. His brother Donald is married to a Mozambican and lives at iMhlamvini in the Umkomaas Valley, across the river from the Aadnesgaards at Phateni in southern KwaZulu-Natal. Cope says that he is in the process of trying to tie up the sale of family farms in the area, all of which are claimed and under offer by the government for redistribution. However the government coffers are allegedly empty, so they are stalling on paying for the farms. Cope considers the agricultural potential of the properties a gold mine, however admitting that little farming is being done in the limbo caused by land claims.

'Who is going to grow all the food? What will happen to all the people living on the farm currently? We have 150 farm labourers. They are not the claimants. Apart from land claims wanting to take all this, these people will lose their jobs and their livelihoods.'

The developments on the various sites such as sheds and installations are undervalued at a mere 10% of their replacement value. The family is not satisfied and wants another valuation. As it happens with land claims, discussion moves to the primary tragedy: the likelihood of the farm never returning to agricultural productivity once redistribution has taken place, and the permanent loss of employment for all the labour that used to work on the farm.

The Aadnesgaards are in this situation. Their Qudeni Store was expropriated. They managed to save their money from trading to start afresh by buying a farm in Natal, and now that too is about to be expropriated. They farm game because of constant stock theft, and this game farm is 'under claim' by some of the members of the same community in which Jean Aadnesgaard works tirelessly assisting those with HIV/AIDS. The basis for the claim she defends, appears not to be a matter of direct dispossession in the context of the implementation of apartheid laws, but rather issues relating to their protection of their farm staff during the Richmond violence.<sup>96</sup> As Phateni is an IFP<sup>97</sup> stronghold, death threats at the time were prolific.

Daily operations are still meddled with. Laws are made which are implemented despite the context. However, experience and a degree of cynicism mean that traders tackle new external issues with different energies. David and Dawn Irons offer coffee to Maureen Ndlela and me and proceed with relating the latest dramas in the district. We are speaking about the health requirements of the trading stores in the 1940s, and David derails saying, 'Ja, remember I told you about that Health Inspector woman coming to our shop, and we told her where to go, sort out all the *spaza* shops and the hawkers selling *shisa nyama* (cooked meat) before you come anywhere near us.' Dawn then pipes up that they are putting in public toilets in town;

'we keep the grass outside our house long, you know, because it doesn't look so bad and it doesn't smell so bad. But charging one rand to visit the toilet – who is going to look after them? Nobody here can afford one rand to go to the toilet! You know, at Bethesda hospital they put in new public toilets. We went there for a function. They were in a deplorable state; all the taps had been stolen.'

Stephen Cope has been targeted by Health Inspectors. Wryly, he says,

'There was this local woman trained through some government capacity building programme to become a Health Inspector who came into the store and started throwing her weight around, telling the staff to wear gum boots and head coverings ..'

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<sup>96</sup> This was a period of political violence between the ANC, IFP and UDM in the late 1990s that had severe repercussions for the region.

<sup>97</sup> Inkatha Freedom Party: Zulu nationalists, and opposition to the African National Congress.

Cope relates that she made it her duty to target his store particularly as opposed to any of the black-owned stores in the area. Stoically he says 'People only have as much power over you as you want them to have'. He tasked MaZondi, a large and forceful woman employee, to deal with the inspector. Eventually, after a couple of insistent visits, a staff member working in the bakery dealt with the inspector in an unspecified manner. She has never returned.

Many traders feel that as formally operating institutions they are subject to health regulations and the like, whereas the real problems lie with the itinerant traders running unlicensed shebeens, taverns and *spaza* shops. Their compliance with the law is the thing that makes them the target of newly trained, semi-qualified inspectors who have no ideas of the reasons for, or the contexts of the laws that they implement. These traders react with ingrained scorn, perhaps seeing a greater world and its consequences and knowing where their operation fits into the greater whole. The reactions of Cope and Irons are similar to those expressed by Morrison in some of his letters and echo the obviousness articulated by Braatvedt in 1949. This continuity suggests that the traders, those still in trade and those who have moved on, understand their place in its context, and their survival means that they cannot allow themselves to become complacent.

### **3.1 Conclusion**

White traders in Zululand were not immune to the various ways in which the authorities could affect them. Initially as traders, they were subject to official decisions in the allocation of store sites which acted as unofficial points of surveillance. Spaced a legislated distance apart, traders such as Johnson view this as a form of official protection of commerce supporting the traders. However, these 99-year lease agreements bound them into a tacit call to arms in support of the Colonial Government should any disturbance occur. In the event of these summons, traders were forced to tread a careful line of allegiance between the official support of the government and the loyalty owed to their customer communities. William Calverley negotiated this dilemma with elegance, identifying his customers and making a swift judgment call saving

their lives. Although it could be argued that this may have tied a paternalistic allegiance even tighter, it was this type of action that was entrenched in communal memory, and perhaps a legend formed in the generational relationship that reciprocally protected his daughter-in-law trading at iNtikwe six decades later. Straddling the line between authority and customer was achieved more recently by Mtubatuba traders Jimmy Morrison and John Fry in their vocal decrying of the Nationalist Government in support of their black staff and the manner in which they ran their shops, as well as their agitation through the correct channels for political change. Ultimately, most traders related to the most fundamental organ of the colonial and Union governments, the magistrate, who was expected to disseminate information and implement it. Many magistrates were similarly challenged. As isolated people they were strongly aware that there would be little assistance from the authorities in times of trouble, and that they had to rely on their own reciprocal relationships for security. Indeed this trend exists even more so today.

Other forms of political interference occurred in traders lives. In 1905, after 15 years of investing in their store sites, many Zululand traders had to defend these expenditures against their leases being withdrawn. These defenses are poignant reminders of the tenuous position that many traders occupy today defending government-sanctioned claims on their land. This too harks back to their experiences in 1977 when many had their store businesses expropriated by the KwaZulu Government in the referential acknowledgment of 'homeland' and 'self-government'. All the events called for defensive positioning; years in trade, investment in the land, reticence to plant crops or to lay pipes should the expropriation take place. Few traders had full title, and most an extremely tenuous tenure.

This insecurity would have been an issue in the event of possible overcapitalization with the rebuilding of the sub-standard trading stores in the 1950s. Legislations had matured through the early Union period, and were more focused on the formation of committees and tightening up the application process. Zululand traders happily ignored all the rhetoric as it was only in the late 1920s that legislation pertaining to them was promulgated. The 1940s ironically were the years when the authorities clamped down. Stores had to be

rebuilt for health and structural purposes, and if this was not the case, it was not long after that stores catering to both black and white customers had to split the trading floor into two. Traders found this infuriating and time consuming, and larger enterprises such as the Ndumu Group, were affected more particularly. Roy Rutherford was left the task of rebuilding the trading stores; a significant event it must have been as he recalls the process in minute detail. For many other traders, this rebuilding is a fact based on knowing rather than experience, not recalling the context or date of the legislation. It was an event major enough in traders' lives that six decades later they still recall it.

The most vital complaint voiced by traders is a result of intervention by authority. Burgeoning competition in the form of *spaza* shops was enabled by the government in promulgating legislation which deregulated trade. Worse is that they allowed public access to the previously restricted wholesalers meaning that the *spaza* shops were in direct competition with the stores but without the overheads that the stores had. This, many volunteer, are the fundamental causes for the demise of their businesses.

Finally, many of the challenges that traders today tackle in greatly changed circumstances are approached with a consistent sense of humour, irony, cynicism and duty as those that trickle down through the oral and written records of their predecessors. 'Government' is a constant which operates in the background. The authorities and the structural network through which they operated were not necessarily benign factors in the lives of the traders since they enabled trade, regulated, altered it materially, and ultimately fragmented it.

## Chapter 4: The commercial trading store

*Jameson's Drift was a wonderful store. You could always tell how good a store was by the number of donkeys tethered outside. This gave an indication of the number of sacks of mealies, mealie meal, beans etc the store was liable to sell that day. Outside Jameson's Drift store it was nothing to see forty or fifty donkeys waiting for their loads. (Ovens 1999:40)*

Working constantly against the vagaries of official intervention was the need to make money and survive. 'Our first store was tiny', Geoff Johnson says. 'The house and the store was one building and you walked along the passage into the store. We knew nothing about trading!' Such was their introduction to trading at Nkonjeni in 1938. It was an old store, scaled to suit the enterprise of the trader and the demands of the clientele. Johnson purchased his own store at Masotsheni in 1950. Today, the original freestone store stands demurely next to the monumental 'new' one, which he built in the early 1950's (see Figure 4.1). The old store has a low, hipped corrugated-sheeting roof and a large wrap-around east-facing veranda which looks on to the trader's cottage, some 30 metres away. The veranda has the Roman Tuscan columns characteristic of buildings constructed between 1910 and 1925.<sup>98</sup> JWT Hall, the proprietor of the 'Masojeni Store' in 1905 described this store as being 'one of the oldest in the country' having being started in 1882 (ZLDC 1905:241).



**Figure 4.1: Old 'Masojeni Store'. The new store is behind (Photo: Author 2009)**

The old cottage behind the store is a modest, saddle-roofed structure, characteristic of the late 19th century. The house and the store are of substantial construction and as such would not have been subject to the rebuild clause of the 1947 legislations, yet Johnson built a new Modernist store and a

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<sup>98</sup> Verandas were often added to, or columns replaced once the original timber had weathered.

large new thatched house after he married in 1953. He maintains that he built these structures as there was 'pressure to change and to modernize' from both his and his customer's point of view. For Johnson, the need for a larger, more contemporary store was related to economy and modernization. The end result is one which was prompted by his perceived need to replace the old counter service store with a new self-service operation. Today, the trader at Masotsheni sits on an open, elevated mezzanine above the main store floor, visible to the customers and able at the same time to see them and to greet them. Even with its two turnstiles and tills it remains, by virtue of its relationships and its stock, essentially a trading store.

Such hybridized operations were confusing. During fieldwork, I noticed that many trading stores operated on a self-service basis in the manner of a supermarket with turnstiles and tills. They had little counter service space yet were patently 'trading stores'. This confusion added to the inscrutability of the *spaza* shop and *its* relationship to the trading store, prompting a need to pinpoint the specific identifiers of the trading store amongst similar operations.

Through interviews it emerged that the different types of trading spaces such as the *spaza*, the trading store and the supermarket, are largely determined by different scales of commerce, interwoven with varying degrees of social expectation and participation. Understanding this complexity was a key factor in establishing the essence of the topic before further examining how it was that the trading stores survived, thrived and died.

This chapter aims to identify the trading store and to define it more specifically, to discuss its position on a fluid scale of commercial operations, and connect the economic success with the social component.

- **Defining the commercial space of the trading store**

As mentioned in the introduction, upon commencing the initial fieldwork the 'tool-kit of parts' which comprised those Modernist stores constructed after the 1947 legislation was my criterion for visual identification.

Interviews with storekeepers and customers followed, together with data collection itemizing stock and prices, and some participant observation. However, as work continued, most of these discussions seemed lacklustre. There was a dearth of connection between trader and client, many inebriated customers, and a seeming lack of participation in the physical and notional values of the structure and space that the store provided. My nostalgia had confused the smaller, poorer *spazas*, those recently built community shops replicated in the Modernist architectural format, with the trading store.

I gradually realized that the visceral recognition of the rural trading store was due to recollection of a *relationship* embedded in *tradition, support and empathy*, all of which were absent in many current enterprises that were little more than pool halls and drinking holes. A moment of epiphany followed after speaking to Dawn Irons from Ubombo. Her comments revealed the depth and value of the relations that existed between the storekeeper and the greater community on all levels. Relationships then became a necessary focus.

Memory of these relationships embedded in tradition and support prompted Stephen Cope, a third generation trader, to abandon a comfortable life in England and return to the Msinga Valley. In contrast to the detached and officious management of the wholesaler locked in his office or concealed behind one-way glass, Cope sits at his paper and ledger covered desk with an ashtray full of cigarette butts, one still burning. The desk is at the very front of the store, in the corner but still in the public space. From here Cope can see the tellers, the person operating the 'smalls' counter, the kitchen and bakery, and, more importantly, everyone that enters. The desk and chairs are standard office cast-offs, ripped and patched with packing tape, and are on the same floor as the rest of the shop and the customers. This lack of elevation is important since the trader can be approached and enter into an engagement. Whilst we speak, there are constant interruptions. Elderly Zulu women from the Tugela Valley,



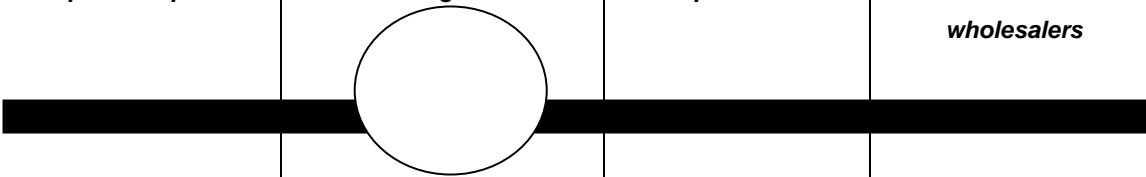
pierced ear lobes dangling and scarves bound around their heads come in to *bingelela*, to greet. A *bakkie* (pick-up truck) arrives, piled high with big blowsy cabbages and there is much activity and interest in the off-loading. Cope says that this farmer has offered them the cabbages at R2.00 each. This is a good price. The farmer, who is from the valley, is happy to be rid of his surplus vegetables without having to take them all the way to Greytown. Buying locally is a way to get cheap food to people with little income and who rely chiefly on an erratic subsistence economy. A flock of goats is snaffling up the loose leaves, and a cheeky one starts to sneak inside which is not even noticed by the customers who enter the store, young *iziNtombi* (maidens) with *amaBhayi* (cloaks) draped over shoulders and a towel wrapped around the waist. Some, particularly the older people, greet Cope tucked away in his corner, remembering his father, uncle and grandfather running the stores.

This store building is not that which was operated by his great-uncle in this valley. The old store is adjacent, forming the skeleton of the 'bottle store', its original form heavily disguised by structural accretions. This, the new one, is 'modernized' and has been for many years. The self-service plan removes the trader from serving 'behind the counter', and the deliberate and personal contact that characterized the old trading stores in the past. However, self-service gives the customers the power of personal choice. Cope manages to straddle the line between the old and the new forms with elegance. His physical, witnessed presence by his customers is as the 'trader' who participates in the lives of the community that he serves

It was necessary to assess these different and individual commercial operations comparatively, in order to fully understand their complexity and to establish the relationships between them. This distinction highlights the fragility of the categorization should one of the components alter materially.

Figure 4.2 (overleaf) places the trading store in a fluid scale of operation in which the different commercial and social components have varying levels of input. Each archetype exists as a definition. Changing fortunes may force a storekeeper to downgrade, providing only essentials and operating as a *spaza*, whereas the entrepreneur grows the business to such an extent that the

relationship with the public is lost.<sup>99</sup> Thus the *spaza* can evolve into a trading store, as can a supermarket become a *spaza*. The following chart was compiled early in the analytical process in order to understand the basic relationships.

Owner managed or reasonably close management/ ownership	Owner managed or reasonably close management/ ownership	Owner managed or reasonably close management/ owner detached	Removed ownership
No capacity for community relations	Capacity for community relations	No interest in community relations	No interest in community relations
Counter service	Counter service/ some till service	Till service	Till service
<i>Spaza shop</i>	<i>Trading store</i>	<i>Supermarket</i>	<i>Franchise/ wholesalers</i>
			
Direct and personal relations	Direct and personal relations	Impersonal relations	Impersonal relations
Economy related to relationship	Economy related to relationship	Economy related to goods	Economy related to goods

**Figure 4.2: Relative comparisons between operations on a fluid scale (Author)**

Each of the operations presented above has value in the space that it occupies in a commercial system. Each system is equally dependent on changes in management, economy, community and cultural landscape. Thus, rather than considering these enterprises as an evolutionary series along a scale of mechanization, it is more appropriate to consider them as 'nested'. Roger Fisher suggests that,

Rather than thinking of 'hierarchy' when referring to systems the idea of nesting seems more useful. 'Hierarchy', literally the ordering of priestly power, still connotes an evolution of pyramidal power whereas systems, being interactive, have influence in both the ascendant and descendant levels in which they are enwombed, much like Russian Dolls or Chinese Boxes. The term 'nesting' is preferred to emphasise this characteristic of systems. (Fisher 1992:12)

Therefore 'nesting' the variant trading operations which have organically emerged in a century-and-a-half, means that each business type occupies an appropriate place in the construction of provincial commercial networks. The following itemizes and defines the various components.

<sup>99</sup> Although one may feel that one has a relationship with a teller in a supermarket chain shop, this affiliation is removed from that of the primary trader, who is in effect, the owner.

- **The *Spaza* shops**

In the two decades since the deregulation of trade as discussed in the previous chapter, the contemporary rural landscape of KwaZulu-Natal has become littered with tiny 'stores' colloquially known as '*spaza*' shops. Architecturally these resemble the Modernist trading store, in which nothing more than an ever-present parapet wall with a tacked-on veranda defines them. Some are garishly painted in their entirety, advertising maize meal, yoghurt or tea. The parapet wall usually bears the name of the store, sponsored by a corporation such as Coca-Cola. The '*spaza*' is known colloquially as a 'tuck' shop. Its premises can vary in scale from small trading store-type buildings to a shipping container. *Spazas* typically carry little stock; a few tea-bags, some bread, cellular-phone airtime, cigarettes, beer and the omnipresent Coca-Cola.

The '*spaza*' itself is a small to medium-size business serving an immediate community over a counter which is usually barricaded. Little conversation or greeting is carried out by customers or counter-hands and trade is perfunctory. The emphasis is to provide basic goods, whilst the low-key nature and reduced scale of the *spaza* allows for scant possibility of any allied support such as transportation of purchases, shoe repairs, provision of telephones, etc., that the trading store would provide.

Despite the marginal nature of their trade, these '*spaza*' shops exist in an unprecedented number. They are utilitarian, one-dimensional enterprises which balance on an economic tightrope of narrow profit margins.

### ○ **The Trading Store**

The trading store is characterized by a wide range of goods, the personality of the trader and the ability to assist the community in an involved and meaningful way. Although this chapter deals with commercial dealings, the social affiliation that informers feel defines the trading store will be articulated, since this directly impacts upon the commercial success of the trading store.

The commercial operation of the trading store is distinguished by a pre-supermarket ethos. Contemporary trading stores stock much the same goods as urban supermarkets, but they differ in that they are commodity specific to a particular localized community. They carry hardware, clothing, and a lot of kitchenware. Ursula Morrison said that the trading store 'stocked anything from a pin to a plough.' Certainly, pins and ploughs are evident at Geoff Johnson's store. At Tshongwe Store bicycle tubes hang from the walls and volumes of Bibles sit behind the counter. In these distant places trading stores still sell petrol and paraffin and some sell coal in areas in which firewood is not easily available. Most are postal agents, continuing a tradition of providing critical communication that started with telephone and telegraph facilities.

The social component is vital in conducting successful trade. An African colleague asked an elderly white storekeeper trading at Pomeroy what he thought the difference between a trading store and a general dealer was. The trader described the trading store as being responsible for the families that it served rather than merely selling goods. The social affiliation was the quality that marked the difference between pure commercial transaction and 'trading' in a community, supporting Dawn Iron's description of the relationship between traders and their customers.

A poignant story comes from the Eastern Cape in which a trader's nephew relates his memory of old men leaving home to work on the mines in Johannesburg. Before they left they would hand their fighting sticks to the local trader who would label them with the owner's name and hang them from the rafters of the store. In this manner the trader became responsible for the man's family until he returned. Whereas a supermarket often has some levels of relationship, the trading store differs in that it is usually able and is expected to

offer a variety of ancillary services which have a goodwill component as much as encouraging trade. Cobbling, clothes alterations, postal collection and deliveries of goods to customers are supplemented by further involvement in the lives of the customers. Traders tell of assisting logistically with funerals, helping local women give birth and facilitating communication with inscrutable authorities. The trading store formed an integral part of a directly radial community, responding to their needs on a number of levels and providing essential support services which previously did not exist. Classically, the relationship was one of direct interaction between customer and the trader or their staff across a single counter. This intimacy meant that an open, responsive personality was important, particularly one that was respectful of different cultures and traditions.<sup>100</sup> A trader's world view had to accommodate varied beliefs and traditions in everyday dealings and practices as well as with the basic provision of goods. One could not always rely on instinct.

Today the high incidence of HIV/AIDS suggests a notable addition to the stock of the canny trader. Coffins provide specific storage challenges which vary with region and belief. Around Umzimkhulu in southern KwaZulu-Natal, coffins are kept in the trading store and on the veranda. Old Transkei traders from this area tell that it was a Boer 'thing' to buy a coffin and take it home to use it as storage for goods. When the time came, the coffin was already paid for. Many local African people in the area appear to have followed suit, given the obvious display of coffins. Further north, Heinz Dedekind was not so lucky. He considered the purchase of cardboard fold-up coffins logical and sustainable as well as affordable in an area in which HIV/AIDS is rife and burial is a non-negotiable cultural practice. He bought a consignment and propped them up next to the tins of jam and pilchards in his Elandskraal Store. For ages the tins of jam and pilchards sat on the shelf. Even as a fifth-generation trader, it took some time for Dedekind to realize that the coffins were the problem and their presence contaminated the food. Now they are stored in a separate room outside. Across the Buffalo River at Masotsheni Store, Geoff Johnson's customers know that he stocks coffins which remain locked and hidden from view in a room distant from the store until requested.

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<sup>100</sup> Besides further comments later in this chapter, Cyril Ovens relates stories which support this, noting that those in contravention of basic social niceties did trade for long (Ovens 1999:36).

Coffins form part of the stock of a trading store, whereas the likelihood of them being stocked by a *spaza*, a supermarket or a wholesaler is remote. Similarly, the transportation of a corpse as described by Dawn Irons in the next section is likely to be undertaken by storekeepers, but not proprietors of the *spaza*, supermarket or wholesaler. This responsibility of the trader in providing goods and services above and beyond retail trade is elaborated on in the following chapter. From this brief discussion it is clear that the relationship between trader and customer is a fundamental definer in the make-up of a 'trading store', and it is the inextricable social component that contributes ultimately, to driving the commercial success of the store.

#### ○ **The Supermarket**<sup>101</sup>

The prevalence of the supermarket in rural areas is a recent phenomenon. They take after their urban counterparts, projecting modernity by associating with urbanity. This does not concern the self-service trading stores discussed later in this section, but rather those shops that sell generic product lines and are stocked accordingly. The OALD describes a supermarket as 'a large shop/store that sells food, drinks and goods used in the home. People choose what they want from the shelves and pay for it before they leave' (OALD 2006:1485). The supermarket as a physical entity separates the customer from store owner on physical, service and personal levels.

Characteristically, many large and established trading stores mutated into supermarkets, with a consequent removal of the presence of the trader and the provision of generic stock. The Spar Group, an international chain, subsumed most of the stores in northern Zululand when Peter Rutherford rationalized the Ndumu Group stores in the 1970s. Trading practices changed and became more removed. Today these supermarkets are managed by an ever-changing series of rotating managers. Their constant is the company logo, company protocol and standard goods, and not the vital and enduring relationships formed with the customers.

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<sup>101</sup> Kim Humphery's '*Shelf Life – Supermarkets and the changing cultures of consumption*' (1998) provides parallels of the emergence of the supermarket, and the nature of shopping in a similar context, where the Australian 'grocery store' mirrors to some degree the trading store – antipodean observation which is relevant to colonial cultures and southern-hemispheric history.

### ○ **The Wholesalers**

The wholesaler is almost as old as the history of trade in KwaZulu-Natal. In the past large, centralized wholesale companies dominated the upper end of the commodity market and were responsible for stocking the remote country stores through a system of traveling salesmen. Wholesalers were mainly located in Durban, close to the harbour for the importation of goods and convenient for overland distribution by rail and road. Besides providing stock to traders, they had credit relationships with them, as discussed further in this chapter.

Today's wholesale businesses are very different. Whereas in the past they were warehouses and showrooms found only in the major cities, today they are discrete enterprises that form part of the commercial fabric of most small towns. No longer are intermediaries such as traveling salesman required, for wholesalers take cheaper goods to the customer. One of today's largest national wholesale companies had its origins in the localized Ndumu Group trading stores, whose founder's grandson, Peter Rutherfoord, was partly responsible for the creation of Boxer Cash & Carry. As Peter Rutherfoord declares, 'We were the first people to go directly to the public. Most importantly the (KwaZulu Cash and Carry) stores were situated on commuter routes.'

Rutherfoord, sitting in the air-conditioned super-cool of the SuperSpar Group Headquarters north of Durban relates with pride his part in advancing the fortunes of the family-managed trading stores of the Ndumu Group. This transition began in the 1970s through alliance with the Spar supermarket group, a move which transformed the individualized trading stores into generic shops with an international franchise and identity. He advocated a move from retail into wholesale trade which led to the opening of the large Cash-and-Carry stores that occupy most towns in KwaZulu-Natal today. Rutherfoord notes,

'There was an entirely untapped market for wholesale. Raymond Ackerman missed the boat – Pick 'n Pay was just too scared of the black market and was not accepting that things were beginning to change, and was reluctant to take the plunge.'

As a third-generation trader Rutherfoord knew his market and could recognize potential. Shortly after he finished business studies at Natal University in Durban he returned to Zululand. Together with Empangeni-based trader Tom

Smith, KwaZulu Cash & Carry was opened in the centre of Empangeni in April 1977. It began as a conventional wholesaler supplying essential commodities such as maize meal, rice, samp, sugar, oil and beans. However, soon the company re-positioned itself and moved into complete retail, supplying informal traders, bulk and retail consumers with low-priced goods. Prosperity followed and in 1979 a second branch was opened in Empangeni. Not quite a decade later, KwaZulu Cash & Carry was taken over by an independent group of investors, who embarked on an aggressive development programme aimed at identifying new store sites in other areas of the province. In 1991 a name change and re-launch firmly entrenched the name of 'Boxer Cash & Carry.'<sup>102</sup> No longer were commercial nodes like the trading store the focus in the community. Instead, wholesaler warehouses formed part of an urban fabric.

Such wholesaler buildings have no architectural resemblance to the trading stores. They are large, gauche, shed-like structures, lacking in internal niceties, cheaply finished and architecturally forgettable. They have little human scale and no humanity; even the logo is an aggressive black, white and red depiction of a man punching the air. The tacked-on veranda is barely functional, a contrived form aimed primarily at branding rather than a basic shelter, differing from the practical and secure veranda space of the traditional trading store. The owners are totally removed, leaving the operations of the business to an organogram of staff and managers. The customer does not know the owner and *vice-versa*. The proprietor has given limits as to what goods to stock, and customers have little power to personally request items. The customers recognize the limits of the wholesaler, although being able to buy cheap consumables in bulk is highly attractive. Wholesalers have swamped rural towns in KwaZulu-Natal in the last two decades supported by a growing infrastructure of local minibus taxis, providing easy access to these stores.

In scrutinizing these relationships, Cant and Van Scheers found that 'The existence of the cash-and-carry wholesaler depends largely on its ability to adapt its marketing functions to cater for the developing *spaza* shops' (Cant &

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<sup>102</sup> <http://www.boxer.co.za/html/companyHistory.htm> (10/09/08). A similar transition occurred with the Lesotho trading firm, Frasers, fifty years before. In this case the third-generation trader knew how the stores were run, and had a vision to modernize them. His strategy was to maximize trade in Lesotho, where most migrant workers originated (Danziger 1979:91)



Van Scheers 2007).<sup>103</sup> Links between wholesalers and *spaza* shops have strengthened, given the burgeoning number of the latter which have emerged since deregulation of trade at the end of the 1980s. At first, many cash-and-carry wholesalers could only serve people licensed to trade. Although by law, *spaza* shops should carry trade licenses, most are illegal because of the cumbersome logistics of getting licensed. Open access to wholesalers has changed to facilitate this, in which the possession of a 'trade card' is the entry requirement and is not dependant on the legality of the business supplied.

- **The trading store as a commercial enterprise**

At first, mutual benefit was seen as the underlying intention in establishing trading stores. Africans would be subject to soft colonization, supported by European-made goods reinforcing missionary views of appropriate attire. Simultaneously, African subsistence farmers had access to a ready market for their goods and surplus.

Originally, trade was based on barter. As a rule, hides and skins provided a good income, particularly during the 1897 Rinderpest when 80% of cattle in Zululand died. At this time, JY Gibson was the Resident Magistrate in the Ndwandwe area. His Magistrates Reports document the operation of stores in his division which sold mainly basic 'Kafir' truck goods as well as cloth and blankets. He comments on the desire for musical instruments, that 'the concertina is the chief; large numbers are sold and afford great amusement to all classes' (Blue Book for Native Affairs 1898:C44). Gibson describes barter as being rare. However, as a result of the Rinderpest the number of cattle hides sold to traders was great. He records a maize surplus. At the same time at Emtongjaneni Resident Magistrate Arthur Shepstone reports that:

...the only trade or barter carried on by the Natives is in cat skins, tobacco, medicine roots, baskets etc....two trading licenses have been issued in Porter's Bundles. (Ibid:C55).

Today, such income generating initiatives are minimal. Local people produce less and rely increasingly on cash incomes from social grants and relatives working in the cities. At some stores the goods sold to the trader by customers

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<sup>103</sup> [ibacnet.org/bai2007/proceedings/Papers/2007BAI7703.doc](http://ibacnet.org/bai2007/proceedings/Papers/2007BAI7703.doc) (10/09/08)  
<http://www.unisa.ac.za/contents/faculties/ems/docs/Press305.pdf>

have specific markets. At Elandskraal, Dedekind takes in Zulu ceramic ware, carvings and traditional items aimed at the tourist market. His location on the Anglo-Zulu War Battlefields Route and effective tourism marketing draws foreign visitors to the store. Some cultural items aimed at resale to other Africans, are sold to the store by customers.

The Blue Books describe historical trading patterns. In 1904 Magistrate Hignett documented that the 14 stores operated by whites in the Nqutu area purchased large amounts of maize from their customers at 5 to 6 shillings per muid.<sup>104</sup> Other items bartered in the area were chickens, turkeys, eggs, milk and 'Colonial-grown tobacco' (Blue Book for Native Affairs 1905:90). In the Ndwandwe Division, customers sold considerable amounts of grain surpluses, chickens and eggs to the traders (Ibid:102). Five stores operated around Hlabisa, as well as people trading mealies (maize) out of the back of wagons (Ibid:96). The Intelligence Division of the Imperial War Office provides commentary on the manner in which trade was conducted.

The trade between Natal and Zululand before the war (1879) was conducted entirely by barter, and was estimated in October 1878 to amount to about 12,000/ per annum. The principal articles imported by the Zulus were blankets and rugs, hatchets, beads, picks and hoes, for which they exchanged cattle and hides....Since the establishment of British jurisdiction over Zululand in 1887, the trade with Natal has largely increased, and the Government of that Colony now pays the Zululand Government the sum of 1,800/ annually as compensation for custom dues on imports. (HMSO 1895:47)

Further comment is provided in a section dealing with 'Money, Weights and Measures'. Under the title, 'Barter' the report says,

Although the Zulus understand the value of money, cattle, best railway rugs (for the chiefs), coloured blankets, cotton blankets, cotton sheets, coloured handkerchiefs, butchers' knives, beads of all kinds, brass pen boxes, wire, lead and Kafir picks always being in demand, are useful as articles of barter. (Ibid:109)

The 1955 Tomlinson Commission found the investigation of barter problematic, largely because the practice was illegal. Direct barter was forbidden by law and the possibility of people acknowledging it was remote. 'Indirect' barter, in which

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<sup>104</sup> A dry measure for corn

goods such as farm produce were sold as the result of purchase was, however, common. Buying produce from customers and selling it back to them later occurred, and the Commission concluded this was open to exploitation.

Certainly this two-way trade continued for years. Even though barter was officially outlawed in the 1930s, in reality it continued for decades. Geoff Johnson remembers 'direct' barter being practised when he started trading in 1950. He discontinued this practise himself, as he felt that by not issuing money and accepting repayment in credit or goods, people were tied to one particular trader. However he continued to purchase the hides and skins that his customers bought in, selling these on to merchants. This practise of 'indirect barter' was not isolated: Ursula Morrison wrote 'Apart from the normal cash transactions, trade was done by barter and store goods would be exchanged for hides and mealies.'<sup>105</sup>

Many stories illustrate this reliance of local people on the storekeeper as an income-generating conduit. Goods were geographically and culturally specific. Ursula Morrison remembers her early married life at Makakatana, in which people living across the Lake<sup>106</sup> used to arrive with buckets of small mussels that they had harvested from the rocks on the beach at St Lucia. She remembers people exchanging cured hides for goods from the store. In central Zululand, the hides and skins that Johnson took in were supplemented by wool, since Masotsheni Store was in a Hlubi-dominated area. 'In a season,' he says 'we used to take in 200-300 bales of wool from the local people and send them off to the sheds in Durban'. Wool is an historical commodity in the Nondweni/Nqutu area, given Hignett's description of the Hlubi people in the early 1900s:

The Basotho residents of the Division are considerably ahead of the Natives in their ideas on trading; many of them planting with a view to putting grain upon the market, and in the season clipping their sheep and selling the wool. (Blue Book for Native Affairs 1905:90)

Johnson continues: 'And bones – we would take in bones too, and these were sent off to Durban to make bone meal.' I tell him a story Magistrate and Native

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<sup>105</sup> (<http://www.makakatana.co.za/history.htm#why> (22/07/08))

<sup>106</sup> Here 'Lake' refers to Lake St Lucia, an estuary separating the coast from the inland region. It has recently been declared a natural World Heritage Site.

Commissioner Braatvedt related about his childhood in Ulundi. The local storekeeper decided to supplement his income by sending bones to a fertilizer factory in Durban, offering salt and sugar to local people who brought in old bones from the *veld*. Despite a healthy respect for the dead this enterprise was obviously very tempting, resulting in hordes of women and girls conveying baskets of bones of those soldiers fallen at the Battle of Ulundi to his store. As soon as the factory established the origin of the bones, they curtailed the enterprise immediately (Braatvedt 1949:10).

Geoff Johnson's father-in-law, Peter Rodseth related a story illustrating the lengths to which traders would go to keep their customers supply open. Whilst traveling to Vryheid on horseback, he arrived at Silutshana Store, run at the time by the Stretch family, to find Mr. Stretch throwing eggs at a pole.

One did not dare stop buying eggs because if you did when the supply exceeded the demand and then asked the natives to bring them again when you needed them, they refused. They said 'When we bring our eggs you will suddenly say you don't want them anymore so what are we to do? We now really don't know if you want them or not! We cannot understand you white people at all: you don't seem to be able to make up your minds.' Consequently traders had to buy all the eggs offered to them during the egg-laying season. This was never a long one...He brought out a basket full of eggs. One by one he threw them to see how many times he could hit that pole. This was his daily pastime during the egg over-production period. (Rodseth 1980:47)

- **The ritual and daily practice of purchase**

The commercial success of the trading store depended to a large degree on the space that it commanded and the manner in which this was negotiated. How it was filled with texture, colour and smell is the stuff of nostalgic cacophony:

A native store in lower Africa has little visible arrangement, the eye and nose being simultaneously taken with a medley of gay fabrics, sticky candy, loose cookies and strongly smelling boots. Whether or not it is large and prosperous enough to command a cleaner and tidier European section, there exists a tacit understanding that this is primarily for native trade, and that rightfully, natives meet and idle here. This is the real native centre, usually the recruiting station for the mines at Johannesburg. (Hourwich Reyher 1999[1948]:36)

This open space of commerce was unusual for local people who had much more prescribed spatial understanding. Indigenous planning amongst the Southern Nguni provides few formalized communal meeting places. Families

occupied separate and distant homesteads under a *uMnumzane*, and 'public buildings' apart from the military kraals known as *iKhanda*, were not as elevated as 'the great place' as suggested by Wilson *et al.* (Wilson & Thompson 1971:265). The King's homestead would have been the most important place through association and power, and not through mutual practice and community brokering. Communal space operated rather as part of an inhabited landscape, along paths, nodes, and rivers. What Hourwich Reyer terms the 'native centre', was thus a new form of space with intrinsic protection since it was not associated with a specific political power. Hilda Kuper said of the neighbouring SeSwathi that pre-colonial perceptions of space were autonomous and tied together with political allegiance, which allowed for flexibility, unlike the Colonial impositions of formal boundaries of civic control. She thus connects the view of space to people instead of delineated boundaries ((Kuper 2003:253). This reinforces the partisan nature of the Natal landscape for the Zulu, and inserts traders and their stores into a more complex interface of spatial perception.

John Argyle and F. Buthelezi investigated the occupation and perception of space within a Zulu homestead and a single dwelling unit (Argyle & Buthelezi 1992). Working from the general knowledge that the individual dwelling unit had a strong correlation with the binary of left and right, in which the left was the woman's side and the right the domain of the man, they determined that this generality was further fragmented into a more specific set of rules. These determined where a person is expected to sit in a single dwelling unit, reliant on relationship to the household head, and age. Thus, the occupation of a small structure is governed by a highly sophisticated set of rules which exist to create order and ordering.

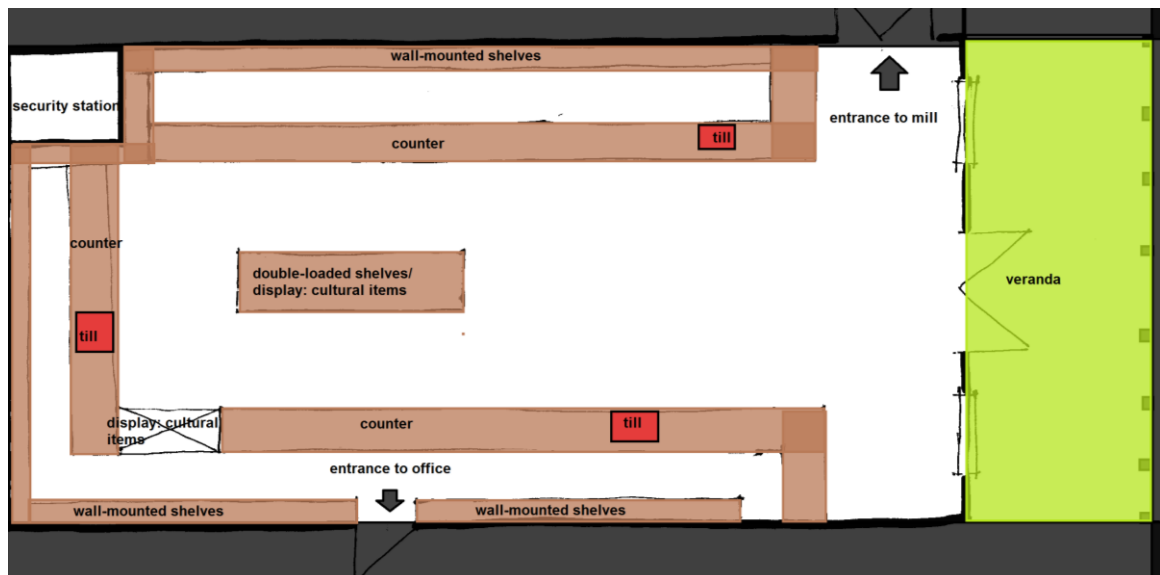
The single dwelling and the structures around it are sited according to status, age and gender, and to some extent, it is a microcosm of the entire *uMuzi* (homestead) with its rules and regulations. Within the single dwelling unit is 'invited' space. Outside the dwellings, open to the sky but contained within the all-embracing *uThango* stockade, is culturally determined space, subject to law and hierarchy. Individual trees provide shelter and shade.

For the Zulu, the space within and without the trading store is differently circumscribed. The architectural language visually translates the hierarchy of space, determined commercial activity and neutral participation in purchase. The different spaces present a series of transitions, namely;

- The open outside world is occupied by and accessible to all.
- The veranda leading into the store is an openly accessible transition space between inside and out, on which interstitial activities can occur. It is part of the store fabric, yet is not actually 'inside' and subject to the rituals that 'inside' suggests.
- The internal store floor is an enclosed public space. In the prologue to this thesis, Noni Jabavu describes the way in which customers occupy the space in the process of completing transactions. It was a platform used to act out a ritual of purchase, completing a series of social games. The customers are from different cultural groups and have different world-views to the proprietor, and are generally the 'owners' of this space. To a large extent, they control the dynamics between themselves as customers and between themselves and the trader.

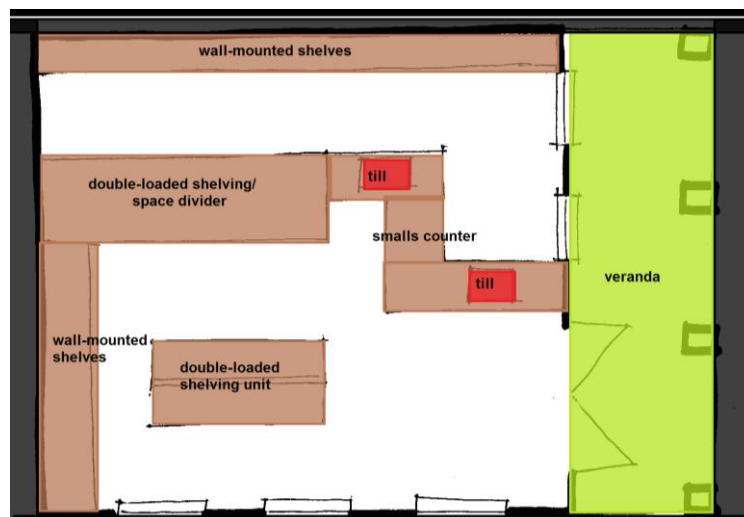
Early trading stores had a single wide counter which occupied the longest wall. Jean Aadnesgaard described the yellowwood counter at iNtikwe Store as being 'polished gold with the fat of a million arms.' Bigger stores had a counter wrapped around three sides of the internal walls. Behind this stood the trader and, in larger stores, the trader's assistants. The length of the counter allowed for the ritual of item-by-item purchase, providing for group participation and public scrutiny of the process. Counter service stores became richly functioning spaces which held the heart of discussion, transaction and purchase ritual.

In more prosperous stores a longer counter allowed for a number of staff to operate sections. Different assistants were responsible for different goods. The 'smalls' counter sold beads and cottons, there was often a fabric salesperson, and another person dispensed flour, sugar and tobacco into paper wraps or small calico bags that customers brought with them.



**Figure 4.3: Schematic representation of Elandskraal Store: primarily counter service**

Apart from the barricaded *spazas*, some stores trading today still operate using a counter, or they combine counter and self-service. Counter service is often used to control small items such as buttons and stockings whereas the larger items are found on the shelves. David Irons runs a very small store at Tshongwe, surviving perhaps through long-established relationships as well as the dearth of any options. He has combined self-service and counter service to maximize space, whilst the size of the store assists in preventing theft. ‘Smalls’ and some other goods such as school books are issued over the counter.



**Figure 4.4: Schematic representation of Tshongwe Store: mixed self-and counter service**

Old traders are emphatic that the most important aspect of trading, *the one* thing which determined success, was eyeball-to-eyeball contact across a counter. Since the customers knew the trader, mutual respect dictated that the traders had to know their customers. Despite the element of distance intrinsic in

the contemporary self-service store, this visual connection with a trader remains paramount in the maintenance of the relationship. Stephen Cope at Keates Drift may be trading from a large self-service store, but his battered desk at the front of the shop is his connection with the community. People know where he is, who he is and feel free to approach him to pass pleasantries or to discuss problems. He is a visible, functioning human being who speaks Zulu fluently, rather than an imported manager who has no vested interest in the business and the community. Importantly, as will be discussed further, the old people remember his grandfather and father, a significant antecedent connection.



**Figure 4.5: Schematic representation of Masotsheni Store: self-service**

Trade in stores entailed a ritual of purchase. An item would be sought, examined, discussed, analyzed, put back, another item taken down, and the same process followed for the next item. Shopping was a community exercise. What a customer purchased was discussed and sanctioned by other customers who would join this ritual. Eventually an item would be chosen, the price discussed, and the laborious process of disentangling money from the folds of a shawl or head dress or tucked in a bosom would ensue. The money would emerge, be slapped on the counter and the trader would take that owing. The



change would be returned to its hiding place and the process would resume. This incremental purchase was an event and it could take hours.

The need to purchase individual items singly, to count out the money, to engage in banter and drama, all foreground the relationship between the customer, other customers, and the trader. The measured way in which this process was enacted, ensured accountability and entrenched a freedom of choice in a country in which, for Africans at the time, scarcely existed. In addition, it provided for a platform of power over the trader by the customer, allowing space for the accounting amongst a largely innumerate group. The Tomlinson Report was specific about customer practice, stating that the choice of 'particular shops....is based chiefly on the integrity and personality of the shopkeeper', and old traders tell of people walking further to a specific store because of these qualities. At the same time, the need to save a few pennies would entail people walking a long distance. There was no routinized spending pattern: people would spend small amounts of money when they received them. The Tomlinson Report concluded that haggling and an 'eye' for a good price resulted from the need to use a small amount of income effectively.

It thus appears that – (i) the Bantu customer is not content with just any article offered him and that the trader must choose his stock judiciously; (ii) the Bantu customer prefers to choose his purchase from a variety of articles, which increases the investment in stock; (iii) the Bantu attaches great value to the integrity and personality of the trader; and (iv) he likes to make his purchase leisurely. (UG61/1955)

This iterative process of purchase in a store is fondly remembered. Whilst Noni Jabavu's (1982) description in the Prologue of this work is elucidatory, the routine was so methodical and geographically widespread that the 1955 Tomlinson Report documented the process of spending. Item 13 notes:

They are slow, deliberate buyers and may spend hours in deciding over a particular small purchase. They like goods to be freely displayed, as this gives them a better chance of examining and feeling them at leisure, while they often harbour suspicion about goods not so displayed. Haggling over prices is a common spectacle, and the Bantu is considered a good haggler. He regards himself as a good judge of quality. (Ibid).

The advent of self-service stores short-circuited this process with the result that nowadays in most stores this routine rarely happens. However, this description is one iterated by many, as an enduring recollection of trading stores.

Early trading store floors thus provided an open space for communication and dialogue. They were conceptually comprehended and accepted spaces in which the ritual of trade was played out. Rather than being insular and personal, this established drama involved all the customers in the store and provided reason and means for people to travel to the store to shop. The store represented an inverted, culturally neutral space.<sup>107</sup> For years, this was a largely liminal space in which both trader and customers lingered on thresholds of mutual relations. The trader was at the mercy of the customers as far as this intense and dramatic process of trade was concerned. For many traders, the only way that they could claim any space for themselves was by closing the doors. Many traders still shut for lunch for this reason.

- **The crisis of self-service**

Geoff Johnson maintains that he was the first Zululand trader who 'went the self-service route.' A friend who traded in Pinetown had seen self-service stores in America and consequently transformed his store. After visiting America himself, Johnson maintained firmly that 'this was the only way to go'. When he implemented self-service at Masotsheni Store in the 1950s there was absolute chaos. 'It was a total shambles' he describes. People felt that dipping their own hand in the sweet jar, removing four sweets and paying for them was tantamount to theft: 'We cannot take the stuff off the shelves' they cried, 'It is theft! You must do it for us!' The floor plan of the counter stores separated the customers from the trader and the goods. It allowed for the ritual in which the components of the purchase process was public and required the mediation of the trader and fellow customers. Having goods in front of you for private, contemplative assessment was tantamount to immediate gratification and was thus viewed with suspicion.

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<sup>107</sup> The trading store provided unbiased service in areas in which internecine rivalry was rife: Traders were sensitive to customer needs, but they were business people and not partisan.

From the late 1950s the concept of self-service stores spread into Zululand. Florence Bateman lays claim to opening the first self-service store in Zululand, whilst Hazel Ueckerman describes her delight, being a 'shop girl' herself, in coming across a self-service store on the way back from Zululand, just after crossing the Tugela River.<sup>108</sup>

When shopping at Cope's store at Keates Drift on pension day, Maureen Ndlela and I are inundated with old women asking us the price of clearly marked goods. 'Some of the old people still talk about pounds and shillings' says Cope.<sup>109</sup> Even though some these stores have been self-service for over 50 years, problems continue to arise with limited literacy and numeracy.

Contemporary self-service stores translate the positions of 'behind the counter' assistants. Johnson has a lady sitting behind a desk who is responsible for doling out meat portions. 'Softs,' or 'smalls,' counters still exist, selling little items across a glazed display cabinet. Cope keeps his beads behind the 'softs' counter whilst Johnson displays strings of glass beads imported from the Czech Republic on the open shelves, but in close proximity to a counter-hand who can offer ready assistance. Self-service today, Cope admits, has to be policed with care. Theft forms a large part of stock shrinkage, thus security guards have to man the shop constantly.<sup>110</sup> Operating extra tills has staffing implications.

Cope describes his operation of Keates Drift Trading Store in the Tugela Valley as being a different approach to running a supermarket from that which pertains in the city. After leaving rural trade, his family ran Pick 'n Pay franchises, supermarkets catering to urban dwellers. Here fully-stocked shelves met with approval whilst empty shelves signified unsuccessful lines. Supermarkets such as Pick 'n Pay employ a technique known as 'filling out' in which the stock is brought to the front of the shelf so that it looks full. By contrast at Keates Drift,

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<sup>108</sup> Given the location of both the Batemans and the Johnsons on the Zululand side of the Buffalo/Tugela Rivers, this could feasibly have been either of them.

<sup>109</sup> Pounds and shillings were last used in the early 1960s.

<sup>110</sup> Crime statistics: The transitional period 1988–1996 shows a marked increase in violence, criminal and 'political' crime characterised by Police/ANC/SDU's/PAC/ Inkatha factions. Assault was up 75%; murder up by 130%; rape up by 150%; robbery up 200%. During the Transitional period 1994–2003 there was an overall increase of 15% for 20 most serious crimes. The population increased by 13% in same period. Murder dropped from 62.1 to 48% [http://web.uct.ac.za/depts/psychology/undergrad/203s\\_files/ct203lec1-4.pdf](http://web.uct.ac.za/depts/psychology/undergrad/203s_files/ct203lec1-4.pdf) (3/12/2010)

shoppers use emptied shelves as a guide; stock hollows indicate successful lines, regardless of cost.

The fundamental principle of trade is in understanding the customers' needs and knowing the market. Manipulating current trends to the best advantage of both customer and trader, and recognizing and responding to local requirements is an important part of staying in trade. Significantly, knowing local prestige brands of goods is vital in running the store. These are often directly connected with successful advertising, and some brands are accorded generic status, such as Colgate, which refers to toothpaste of any type. Vocal advertising is carried out on pension days, blurted through speakers, or a product may be the subject of a travelling dramatists show. Different areas become differently targeted by the manufacturers. The 20kg bag of the staple food maize meal is a case in point. Different communities across the province have different perceptions as to which one is superior, and they are prepared to pay the price. Whilst some areas swear by 'Ace', other districts support 'Nyala'. Inappropriately chosen maize meal will not sell, nor will the wrong sugar, beans or tea-bags.

- **Access to lines of credit**

Understanding the customers' needs leads to the preparedness of the trader to allow credit. Access to money for the rural poor is difficult. Most people rely on family members for monthly support and many claim social grants. Even today most people do not qualify for bank accounts and have limited access to banking facilities. When they do exist, banks and ATMs can be distant. Because of this, storekeepers in the past operated as informal banks. Offering access to credit at a time in which mobility was constrained tied customers to the stores and increased the interdependence between trader and customer. In the last two decades higher crime rates and targeting of rural businesses has made traders reticent to offer credit. Indeed, the Morrisons' arrangement with banking their customers' money ceased over a decade ago when their store at Nyalazi was broken into and the cash from the safe robbed. Today few traders will take the chance of offering credit as the risk of potential robbery is deemed too great. Rather, the aforementioned interdependence between the trader and their

necessary income from customers has developed alternative, more secure techniques which benefit both parties.

Despite the monthly round of the pension payouts Cope does not offer credit as his forebears used to. He did in the past, limiting the service to pensioners who would have a guaranteed income. However he learnt his lesson through hard experience, wryly noting that often, when he did offer credit to people on a regular pension income, they avoided him for months.<sup>111</sup> His debtors would rather spend all their money traveling to Tugela Ferry to do their shopping than pay him back. He admits that he does lend cash to a few elderly people on an *ad hoc* basis who always pay him back even if it is sometimes months later. David Irons at Tshongwe allows credit on 30 days to his regular pension customers. A single default terminates this relationship, and the customers know this. He, too, has learnt the hard way.

Like other most other store owners, Stephen Cope used to cash cheques for customers since most people have no access to banks or bank accounts. In recent months he has had two instances in which he cashed two plausible but fraudulent cheques 'issued' by the Receiver of Revenue. These were both for large sums of money and their not being honoured has made him cautious. Fraudulent events like this make traders increasingly reluctant to assist needy people with banking matters although the drastic decrease in the use of cheques, mainly due to fraud, minimizes the need for these transactions. Today the pension is paid out on a card, bank accounts are more accessible, and funds can be loaded onto a cellular-phone simcard by a third party.

Another long employed technique of making items more affordable for the customer is the offering of lay-byes<sup>112</sup> which, Cope says, tends to cement the reliance position; the customer to the shopkeeper waiting for his purchase and the trader to the customer waiting for his final payment.

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<sup>111</sup> Times again have changed. Whereas in the past, the elderly relied on the income from their children working away from home to support the family, HIV/AIDS has obliterated the younger income-generating sector and left their children in the care of their aged parents. Their pensions are thus stretched to feeding and educating their grandchildren, increasing the poverty levels.

<sup>112</sup> Lay-bye: the reservation of an item for the customer until the purchase price has been paid.

On the same bank of the Tugela River, Heinz Dedekind at Elandskraal runs a smaller operation than Cope's in which credit plays a significant role. His *modus operandi* is having a pension payout 'speedpoint' connected to his till. Although Dedekind pays the bank charges on the operation of the machine, it allows pensioners to draw small denominations from their monthly payment throughout the month. 'Many old ladies just want to buy some potatoes' he says, 'and if they draw all of their pension out at once, the likelihood of them getting robbed of their entire monthly income is huge'. This system, he says deprecatingly, prevents their income from falling into the hands of nefarious relatives. Whilst control of the funds is vested in his operation of the 'speedpoint', most of the old people would trust him with their pension rather than their family members. Although again, this creates chains of dependence between storekeeper and customers, in the absence of any alternatives this system functions to the benefit of both parties.

'Trade these days is difficult' says Stephen Cope. Long ago in Msinga, the Bata Factory at Keates Drift employed many people, particularly women who would spend their income at the local store. Nowadays the income base in the area is reduced to old-age and disability pensions, and social grants. Cope has had to create incentives to draw customers, realizing that running a business is part of the challenge, and viability is part of what keeps him there. One example is the installation of a 'Bob' machine for ATM withdrawals, the only access to electronic funds in a 30km radius. Like Dedekind, he runs a pension machine which works on fingerprint identification. At one stage he offered a full payout service, but found that people would come and get their pensions and would then spend no money in the store. Although this service has always been regarded as *quid pro quo* to some extent, he found that all his working capital would leave the store in the form of pension payouts and he would have little cash to operate with. He circumvented this by instituting a voucher system which means that a proportionate amount of the pension payout is issued in the form of a voucher, which has to be spent in the store. There was some resistance at first as people thought that he was stealing money from them by merely taking a tithe. However, once it was clearly established that this voucher was a credit note the system was accepted.

'The cultural systems in Msinga are changing rapidly' says Cope, blaming the government institution of a child grant. As indicated in Chapter 1, women from Msinga used to be highly valued, to the extent that city men would come to this district to find a virtuous wife. For a girl's parents, the commodity value of a virgin daughter was equated to 11 cattle *lobola* bride price. Such vested financial interest has resulted in cultural systems such as virginity testing becoming more popular amongst Zulu communities. This is supported by an aggressive initiative by King Goodwill Zwelethini, the current king of the Zulu, to revive this custom as one of the means of fighting HIV/AIDS by prolonging the commencement of sexual activity in young women.

However, from the girls' point of view, says Cope, the institution of the Child Grant counteracts this as the young girls in the valley see an opportunity of earning R160 per month from the government just for having a child. It is perceived as a source of income without weighing up the real costs, such as the intergenerational conflict and compounded poverty which is created. The recent rapidly rising costs of inflation means that this, like other social grants such as pensions, is no longer a viable amount. The system has backfired for those who benefit from it. The Child Grant has not risen commensurately with the price of petrol or the staples of maize, rice and oil which have doubled. Indeed, given his situation and the community in which he works, Cope is canny enough to realize that the overall potential income for his store is limited by benefits collected by the local community, most of who claim in one form or other.

Sometimes the management of credit indicates enduring relationships. Jean Aadnesgaard recalls an incident after her father's death whereupon calling in decades of credit accounts to his customers she was visited by an old man who had come to pay his debt. His name was not associated with any significant debt when she paged through the thick ledger. The old man was insistent that he had bought a specific plough from her father. It emerged that years previously this old man had seen her father assembling a plough in his field and had asked to buy it. Louis Calverley had sold it to him 'on account'. The old man wanted to honour this debt, specifically because Mr. Calverley had been his friend. Such credit at this time was discretionary and a part of the relationship that the storekeeper had with his customers.

- **Chains of (in) dependence**

From time to time, credit lines between the wholesalers, traders and their customers were extended beyond sustainable means, forcing a greater interdependence between all three groups.

The relationship between the trader and the community had no greater test than the trying years at the beginning of the 1930s. The Great Depression was exacerbated by intense locust invasions. As with the Rinderpest and East Coast Fever, black and white subsistence farmers lost staple crops in the locust swarms, which increased their dependence on traders who were importing government-subsidized supplies. The locust invasions were intensified by bad droughts which further compromised the production capacity of the land.<sup>113</sup> During this period, established relationships were the fabric of existence. Traders relied on wholesalers and the starving customers who had lost their crops and cattle relied on the traders. Many traders that had extended lines of credit to customers lost everything and moved into cities to look for work. In later droughts this chain of dependence was perpetuated. Indeed, access to credit during times of hardship and other direct support is related by many informants as a marker indicating the relationship between the traders and the customers, whether black or white. Hobart Houghton and Forsdick support this, saying that during famine the reliance on traders by communities in the Keiskamma Hoek area increased. However in times of surplus, extra produce would be sold to the trader, and the income used to purchase what in 1950, were regarded the semi-luxury goods of tea, coffee and sugar (Hobart Houghton & Forsdick 1950:3).

During the Great Depression, many Zulu were anxious to sell off surplus cattle for food. The Magistrate Braatvedt tells a story of his brother, also a magistrate, posted at Nongoma. His official responsibilities involved him looking after the interests of the Zulu, and he suspected that white 'speculators' were exploiting the situation of these people wanting to sell their cattle, purchasing cheaply knowing that there was no food or grazing (Braatvedt 1949:125). He found

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<sup>113</sup> Drought was not a new experience. In 1896 the government supplied over 10 000 bags of 'drought relief' maize for purchase in Zululand alone. For communities, the implication of this was disastrous. Because they needed to purchase food due to lack of subsistence crops, Africans in Zululand had less money to pay Hut Tax (Mackinnon 1990:102).



himself pitted against local vested interests and battled to set up auctions for the sale of cattle rather than leaving the Zulu people at the mercy of those buying them. He tried to rally support in this endeavour. His own employer, the Department of Native Affairs, was reticent, as was the head of the Zulu Royal House at the time, Paramount Chief Cyprian. However, he did manage to garner some backup from the Mandlakhazi section of the Royal House and the first auctions were held with Adams, the Empangeni trader who had stores at Nongoma, officiating (Braatvedt 1949:116). A later drought had similar effect:

There was a period...in the late 1950s, we had severe droughts and the natives were unable, for two years, to reap any form of crops, so they relied entirely on us for their food. We were getting SAR (South African Railways) truck loads full of maize, but then, there was always the problem of distribution. We would send out a truck but it always took so long before it got back. Sihangwane, for instance, is only 100kms from Mkuze, but it was almost a full day's return trip. (Rutherfoord 2000:58)

Of the nearly two dozen stores in the Maputaland region owned by The Ndumu Group, Roy Rutherfoord notes that in times of economic stress the most difficult to control were the Muzi and Kosi stores. Being closest to the Mozambique border they were not only supporting their normal customers, but they were feeding people from miles inside Mozambique on rations intended for South African residents. One could not turn people away, however:

..the whole family used to come down and they would buy a bag of maize, a little bit of sugar and other oddments. Each one would carry something. The bag of maize would be divided into two, which usually the two 'mamas' had to carry, and off they would move back again to their homes. (Rutherfoord 2000:58)

Irons recalls drought years in which government-supplied maize would be issued in paraffin tins, known as kokoks, (*igogogo*) through traders. The more unscrupulous traders were known to short-change the maize.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Ovens notes: "The grain was stored in large corrugated iron grain tanks. The grain was purchased by the "igogogo" or 4 gallon paraffin tin, strengthened around the top with a timber frame, to which was attached a handle. Most traders were strictly fair in their dealings but there were a few who had two "igogogo", one for buying with, where the sides were bashed out and another for selling the grain where the sides were bashed in, so giving them at least a 10% advantage (Ovens 1999:30).

Whilst traders were supporting vast communities through credit extension, they were themselves at the mercy of wholesalers who were underpinning the traders. This created a separate series of extended lines of credit, and in many cases entrenched a company reciprocity which endured for many decades after the Great Depression. Many of the still-functioning stores are officially indebted to companies such as Moshal Gevisser, GW Jagger, and the like.

In Natal, four main 'General Wholesalers' supplied most of the rural stores and were largely dependent on the effectiveness of their 'traveling salesmen' to promote their wares. In Durban, Moshal Gevisser offered credit to traders in trouble. Cyril Ovens, relating memories of a later period, told a story in which offering credit was perceived as a strategic move.

I was in fact offered finance by this organization to take over Tugela Valley Trading in Tugela Ferry. For two reasons; they would be very happy to have the best store in the area welded to them, and as I was sales manager of Jaggars, it would have disrupted Jagger's growing inroads into the market place. (Ovens 1999:12)

This technique worked. The young Roy Rutherford moved to Durban in 1933 and started working for Randles Bros. and Hudson in the hardware section. 'I think it was because of the amount of business we gave them' (Rutherford 2000:46). The Rutherfoords' thus had had a 'relationship' with Randles Bros. and Hudson. As Rutherford says,

In those days, wholesale merchants were in the habit of financing traders at an interest of 10%. The condition was that all purchases were to be made solely from them. We were assisted in the purchase of Eastwoods (headed at Othobothini) by Randles Bros. and Hudson. (Ibid:18)

This arrangement tied traders into a system of economic dependence and then ultimately, once the debt was cancelled, one of loyalty. Ovens' memoirs reinforce the relationship between traders and these distant retail entities Of Randles Bros. and Hudson, he says that they,<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Surprisingly, for a 'traveler' who would know who supported which store, Ovens recalled that the Rutherford's had been supported by WG Brown (rather than Randles Bros.) during the Depression, and that they had remained loyal to this wholesaler ever since (Ovens 1999:35).

..had a wonderful reputation among the traders, many of whom owed their very existence to this organization. They were, in turn, out of pocket, as their support systems to the community that they served extended to the provision of credit. Some very large country stores were helped over difficult times in this way. (Ovens 1999:9)

WG Brown and Co Ltd took the opportunity to 'weld' trading stores to their wholesale enterprise by assisting traders financially. These arrangements were a primary means of access to finance for new traders. When the Batemans began trading at Dlolwana in the late 1950s, WG Brown and Co. Ltd offered them interest-free loans. Florence Bateman says that 'Mr. Clousen allowed us advance in stock to set up the store. We did not have pay any interest and we paid the whole debt back in 16 months. That would never happen today!'

In a post-apartheid South Africa critics are wont to decry the equilibrium of power relations in historic credit systems as putting the power in the hands of the issuer of credit, thus creating an imbalance in the relationship that existed between trader and customer. Countering this, Penelope Harvey describes the example of the Andean people in Peru amongst whom she worked, in which the traders did not hold all the power. Rather the creditors held repayments in abeyance until they were ready and willing to pay their debts, and until then, the financial balance of the trader was held in limbo (Harvey 2001:204). The same can be said for Cope who may wait months for repayment, or Jean Aadnesgaard who was repaid a debt she did not even know her father had. The power chain is like the extended lines of credit, only more subtle. Whereas Stephen Cope is cognizant of the fact that his business survives on the contemporary government pension payouts, Harvey's Peruvian traders were aware that the gold price determined their survival so that when the migrant workers arrived home when the gold price was high, trade would be good. If the gold price was low, trade would be bad, and the money would be spent on more important things than beer. Indeed, it was very easy for a creditor not to pay back the money owed in these circumstances. In Msinga today, the increased social and financial demands imposed by HIV/AIDS could be deemed more important than repaying a debt. Harvey describes that being in trade was as challenging as working in the agricultural sector in Peru, since much time was spent chasing down the customers to find them and claim the debt. 'The trader has to calculate when his clients will have the money to pay and cannot call in

his debts to suit himself' (Ibid:204). This discretion is much the same as practised by traders in Zululand today.

A contemporary chain of dependence between supplier and trader is evidenced by contemporary decorated trading stores. Gaudily painted buildings, both old trading stores and *spaza* shops, scatter the province, advertising maize meal, tea, porridge, soap and the like. Nyala maize meal, named after a shy buck and sold only in KwaZulu-Natal, is prominent. Ironically branded in the colours orange, white and blue, it is reminiscent of the old South African flag. Attempts to contact Premier Foods, the manufacturers of Nyala, to establish how the branding and the colour scheme were chosen, were unsuccessful. However, traders say that bulk suppliers to stores and *spazas* will paint the name or the store building, subject to an agreed quantity of product sales. Garish orange, white and blue buildings littering the province are a visual marker of contemporary chains of dependence between advertiser, product and trader.<sup>116</sup>



**Figure 4.6: iNsuzze Store, decorated by Premier Foods (Photo: Author 2006).**

<sup>116</sup> 'The deployment of advertising as 'the official art of capitalism' brings advertising strategies into art, and art into advertising strategies' (Harvey 1989:315).

- **Altered circumstance, closing stores**

Not only changing credit systems but rapid urbanization, high incidence of crime, acute poverty and HIV/AIDS are all factors that have characterized the last decade of trading. They have introduced new challenges, new paradigms and altered the way in which traders operate. An important factor is that contemporary traders cater to an infinitely more mobile population. The minibus taxi predominates, and these travel today on routes which were not even covered by bus in the past. Private individuals charge their neighbours for transport. Thus, providing sufficient incentives for customers to support local stores rather than rely on public transport to buy cheaper goods is one of the challenges that today's trader faces. Times have changed and storekeepers, being businesspeople, have had to keep up with them to stay in trade.

After 55 years of running Masotsheni Store, Geoff Johnson feels that it is now time to retire. His children have embarked on their own entrepreneurial careers, and are not wont to take over trading. He cannot give his store away; even though it has been on the market for some time he has had no offers. In today's world, he says, few whites want to live in a place as remote as St. Augustines. His only option was to enter into partnership with some 'Pakistanians', as he calls them, who have been trading near Nkandla. 'This poor man', he says,

'had just taken over, and put his money into the business. That's when the five men with guns arrived. It was an inside job, I am sure. Just as he was locking up at 7pm five guys dressed in black with balaclavas arrived, pistols, AK47s the lot. They took 26 grand. The night watchman only comes on at nine at night and the day guard had gone off so they know the movements. I am sure that it's the night watchman. Look, there he goes, cocky bugger!'

His customers don't want him to leave, and his staff is wary about new masters. These tensions manifest themselves in criminal incidents. Nowadays, no-one wants a trading store. People are afraid to live in remote areas away from shops and schools, there is scant trading tradition left, and trader's children have become professionals or work, like Johnson's son, in other forms of trade such as wholesale. There are anomalies: Cope returned to trade in an area which is considered notoriously dangerous as did Heinz Dedekind at Elandskraal.

Altered parameters of change need new paradigms. 'I want to do something with the *spaza* shops. Most of the *gogo*'s (old ladies) don't have the money to catch the taxi to the store, or to town'. Cope is a businessman who has realized the limitations of his market. He has to think creatively in order to make extra money, but simultaneously is careful not to compromise his customer base. Local people rely heavily on *spaza* shops for basic provisions, which Cope notes, play vital roles in the commercial webs of distant and sometimes inaccessible communities. He plans to supply these shops with a greater variety of goods, at a 10% mark-up. Most *spazas* stock their shops locally, or travel to towns, where they pay the 10% mark-up anyway. Cope feels that purchasing from bulk wholesalers in the cities can cut out the middleman, thus the mark-up he would charge is what the *spazas* are charging already. They incur no transport costs of their own and, importantly, there would be a greater variety of goods available to old people without them having to travel to Keates Drift.

This extension into the community is important for him. Currently, he uses an old Ford van to deliver heavy items such as cement or maize meal to customers. The old van is more practical on bad roads and tracks, and its condition makes it undesirable for hijackers. Every few months Cope makes the deliveries himself in order to renew acquaintances and familiarize himself with the quotidian challenges that his customers face.

Traders offer incentives providing transport to their stores. Heinz Dedekind operates a tractor and trailer to collect people that have traveled across the river by ferry, up to his store. The ferry used to be part of the store's operations, but has since been contracted out to a local ferryman. Rather than embarking on a long climb up a steep dirt road, customers know the times that the store tractor collects people to take them up to the store and plan accordingly.

Unlike a *spaza*, a large store invests greater capital in its stock. Altered circumstances force buying patterns to change. Cope is unseated. He has always been instinctive in choosing stock, but the recent rapid rise of inflation 'has played havoc with this instinct'. For the first time he is unable to predict what goods people are going to buy. The 'knock-on' effect of less available money due to the doubling of costs of staple foods has influenced his stocking

of the store as well as his cash flow. However, he views change as being good. The physical pension payout and the pension machine will be moving closer to his store, a slight change, he feels, that will benefit his business, which at the moment relies on the creation of an event on pension days. Besides the draw of the migrant pension market that moves from pension payout to pension payout, Cope ensures that his store is the centre of activity: a float truck blares out loud, distorted music, interrupting the cacophony to blurt out advertisements and wholesale specials. On pension days, the travelling advertising dramas arrive, captivating the crowd with whiter whites, high-foaming washing powder and vitamin-enriched sugar. No longer confined to the physical store floor, the dramas are now enacted on a greater stage with the trading store as the focus.

One of the biggest challenges that traders face today is dealing with the incidence of HIV/AIDS and how it materially affects their customers. Dawn Irons runs her hospice at Ubombo and besides taking in AIDS orphans she runs support programmes with child-headed households in the community who care for their siblings. In such homes, survival means that basic issues of socialization and instilment of value systems are neglected. When Cope catches schoolchildren stealing he says 'it is simple. I take away their school shoes. I issue a fine of R50 which they have to pay back, the money goes into a jar, and it is used by the staff towards their Christmas party. I can't really justify using it for anything else.' If the children have parents, they pay the fine and they get the shoes back. In a recent incident he was assisted by Ben Mchunu, a local schoolmaster. A young lad living close by had no parents and little schooling, and had already been caught stealing about 15 times. Through the school infrastructure, Mchunu was required to help by creating some sort of framework to support the boy, as well as to help instill values and discipline. Cope is reliant on the services of other elders in the area. Besides maintaining reasonable relationships with the *iNkosi* of the Mchunu in particular, he relies heavily on MaZondi who works for him. She holds political sway in her position as the locally respected head of the Women's League.

Many factors affect trade today. The rapidly mobilized and connected population of KwaZulu-Natal is situated against and within a setting of dire poverty and isolation, a challenge with which traders have to come to terms.

- **Supplementing the income from trade**

Stephen Cope's plan to supply *spaza* shops is a contemporary example of methods traders use to supplement their income. It must be stressed that most of these businesses were to the direct benefit of the trader, and simultaneously to the direct benefit of the customers. Commercial adjuncts feature throughout the history of trading, many of which affected the footprint of the trading store and extended it materially.

For well-placed and canny traders, supplemental businesses assisted in developing the scale of the store, both in its commercial dealings and its physical footprint. Although many stores were small, others comprised a complex of facilities which grew incrementally over time as demand determined. Economics played a large role as the scale of both the individual buildings and their position within a greater complex comprising a 'trading post' is one which was prescribed by a number of different external factors such as favourable position along a well-traveled route and proximity to such places as the celebrated railhead at Somkhele, for example.

Because most Zululand stores were tied into leases with the Department of Native Affairs they were legally obliged to provide certain facilities. One of these was overnight accommodation for road travelers and any staff which may be traveling with them. The commercial traveler Cyril Ovens speaks ironically about the provisions for staff, describing the rough accommodation that the 'sample boy' was usually allocated. For this reason, the 'sample boy' often chose the store along the route at which to overnight (Ovens 1999:2). Similarly wagon drivers, cattle drovers and, particularly on the icy Lesotho border, baSotho wool sellers needed accommodation on the road and shelter from unpredictable snow falls. Provision for accommodation and storage meant that some of the larger, well-placed enterprises located on prominent routes evolved into vast complexes of buildings, and often formed the nucleus of a small village. Besides the provision of accommodation, the lease usually covered a full 100 acre plot. Traders could use this land to grow fruit trees as well as pine, eucalyptus and wattle trees which were in demand by local people for building houses. They were allowed to graze cattle, pigs and sheep. Some traders ran



butcheries and bakeries, both of which became subject to strict health legislation and resulted in most of them closing down.

Trading itself was often an economic adjunct. Many farmers in the 1930s, hit by natural disasters as well as the ravages of the Great Depression, turned to trade to supplement their income. Mark Johnson, his blind wife and young children bought their first store in 1938 after their farm was hit by disaster. Jean Aadnesgaard agrees that trade was a way of making money. After she married Olav Aadnesgaard in the 1950s, she realized that farming was not very lucrative. Coming from a trading family and, by her own admission having storekeeping 'in her blood', they decided to trade at Qudeni, a small, remote town. Her mother lent them money. Aadnesgaard describes it as being 'the usual 100 acre allotment'. Conditions were not easy. The first winter was inclement, including snow, and they were living in the store whilst they were building their house next door. They were lucky enough to have electricity, run from a generator. Although she and Olav were both fluent Zulu speakers, Jean needed to 'learn' her new customers as they differed from her 'known' cultural group she had grown up with at iNtikwe.



***Figure 4.7: Continued hardship at Qudeni. January 2010, mud in the foreground and Qudeni Store in the distance (Photo: Author 2010)***

Survival drove the Rutherfoords to trade but running the store itself was almost secondary. An important component of their story not mentioned by either Roy Rutherfoord in his memoirs or by his son Peter was the exact reason for

purchasing the original stores. A. de V. Minnaar in his well-considered volume on the Zululand sugar industry noted that the lack of labour on the sugar farms after World War I prompted the recruitment of labour agents.

At this time the labour conditions under the Portuguese authorities and on the Portuguese plantations and farms in Mozambique were harsh, so when workers (mainly Tongas) used to come across the border to buy their supplies from trading stores close to the border, they would at the same time ask for work. These stores thus became informal labour-recruiting centres and with the opening up of more and more of Zululand after the First World War... various mill groups tried to ensure access to this source by buying up stores. (Minnaar 1992:94)

After the Umfolozi floods of 1918 RH Rutherfoord was,

...approached by the board of directors of the St. Lucia Sugar Co., to make trip to the north-eastern parts of Zululand (the Tongaland and Maputaland areas) to spread the news among the inhabitants that work was again available at the mill. Rutherfoord, on arriving at Ndumo in the Ingwavuma district, found that the owner of the local store, L.C. von Wissel, wanted to sell his two trading stores at Ndumo and Tonga. Rutherfoord was joined by some planters at Umfolozi and a syndicate, the Ndumo Co-operative Labour Association, was formed to buy these stores with the primary object of procuring labour for working in the cane fields. (Ibid:95)

Corporate intervention by sugar companies proliferated. JD Smythe, who operated Ubombo Store before Jack Irons, owned the BC Harrison and Co. stores. He sold his stores at Phelindaba and Maputa to a rival sugar company, UVS Ltd in 1920, and they were then re-registered as Harrison & Co Ltd. Minnaar continues saying 'By the 1921/22 season the entire cane-cutting operations of UVS Ltd were being carried out by 80 black workers recruited from Maputaland and Mozambique' (Ibid:96). On the one hand, one is tempted to suggest that these stores operated with the sole purpose of sourcing labour. Alternatively it was a real point of contact for people from the area as well as Mozambique to purchase goods, access employment information and arrange transport to Johannesburg. It was a vital link in local and regional networks.

Labour recruiting as an adjunct business was never abandoned by the Rutherfoords. For decades their stores served as Labour Bureaux for the mines, and their 'bus lines were originally established in order to transport these recruits to Johannesburg for work. Roy Rutherfoord took over the northern Zululand stores for the Ndumu Group after the death of his father in 1947. His

son Peter says that he was notorious for being more interested in the running of these transport buses than trading. Transport was an important and cost effective adjunct to the administration of the stores, which he left in the able control of his wife Maureen. Given the inhospitable landscape of the Makhathini Flats, this transport business was the means by which people got to the stores, and the means by which the stores too, were stocked. Thus these businesses were inextricably linked to distant places by a variety of means.

Transport was provided in other ways. Mention has been made of Heinz Dedekind running a tractor and trailer down to the Buffalo River. Ferries were often operated by the storekeepers. These brought the customers to the store and they carried them home with their goods. Initially these were operated by the store-keeper, but once the business had grown they were a cumbersome extra and were usually passed on to a local person to operate.

Thus, trading stores developed specific commercial practices which were as dependent on extended and geographically dispersed relationships as they entailed the making of money.

## 4.1 Conclusion

Nesting the trading store with the other commercial enterprises discussed defines it within a market system, which has the potential to expand or contract within the parameters of the socio-economic criteria that comprise it.

The viability of the trading store was as reliant on the social support which the trader extended to customers, as it was on the variety of stock that it kept. This relationship distinguishes it from the smaller community *spazas*, the supermarket and the wholesaler. The most vital factor in the trading store retaining its position on this scale is its social component. The trading store is therefore identified as relationship-based, supporting the community beyond the ambit of market trade alone.

The trading store had the capacity to negotiate change, moving to adopt till-based self-service systems as necessary components of modernization. Canny traders recognized, as they still do, the value of personal connections and extended relations in successful trade. Such relations included the extension of credit to communities and supporting them in times of famine and hardship. This gratuity was supported by the wholesalers who required loyalty in return. These relationships placed the trader within a network of responsibilities, in which economic survival was interlinked with the social of a very particular type.

The need to supplement income locked stores into a network of adjunct systems which extended the influence of the store and the trader. Particularly after World War I, sugar companies sourcing labour viewed stores and their inherent relationships as vehicles for contact, and in turn provided a vehicle for employment for many people in extremely peripheral areas of Zululand.

Today traders still adjust and extend their operations in response to an ever-changing society. Many factors have had devastating effects on their businesses and they have to constantly invent new ways of dealing with survival and their customers. For them, success is equally reliant on economy and sociality, and they are thus mutually interdependent.

## Chapter 5: The social trading store

*Living alone in these isolated parts of Zululand, deprived of social intercourse with other white men, or seeing the same one or two faces day in and day out, for months on end, naturally left its mark, and had the effect of making some people rather eccentric. Individuals who showed such symptoms were referred to as having the 'Zululand tap'. (Braatvedt 1949:83)*

This necessary sociality with customers extends into other close knit networks: Geoff Johnson says 'have you spoken to the Batemans?' I reply, 'Yes, and Jean Aadnesgaard.' 'Goodness! Where is she now?' he exclaims. 'Did you know that one of the Aadnesgaards married a Clark, and there was a Fisher who married a Calverley'. These intimate familial connections display the links that one trading family had with another. Johnson had seen Florence and Barry Bateman relatively recently. He enquires after the Rutherfoords, specifically where they were living, as the last he had heard they were in Durban. Dee Hay, his sister interjects 'What has happened to Maureen – she was such a lovely woman! She ran the stores you know, with a fist of iron!' Maureen is Peter Rutherfoord's mother who, from all recollections, had 'lost it a bit'. I had not bothered to contact her for this particular reason. I replied that I had not heard that she had died and had been with a relative of hers only the day before. The reputation of the matriarch of a trading empire had filtered through to traders at distant Nqutu, for whom travel to Mkuze, the most accessible point of the Rutherfoord Empire, is a long journey. These intertwined and still extant social connections smoothed the path of this study. Most traders in their new lives are able to pass on phone numbers and provide information about who ran which store and what happened to them. The stories permeate the lattice of the trading community, and people keep abreast of the news of other families which comprised their social landscape of the past.

The relationships that were forged between traders and their customers were most enduring. Johnson is convinced that the strength of his relationship with the Molefe community at Masotsheni is based on the affiliations that his father and grandfather had had with *their* parents and older relatives. The old men transfer an inculcated respect for their forefathers and their connections and accord the same value to the current generation. Stephen Cope concurs; people remember his father and uncle trading in the Msinga valley and these connections serve as gatekeepers for his automatic acceptance into the area. Old people come into the shop and 'know' him because they knew his

grandfather. He finds this confusing, for at the same time he is expected to 'know' them back. Florence Bateman and Jean Aadnesgaard tell of people walking 20 kilometres to visit their brother's store at Mazabeko just because he was William Calverley's grandson, rather than patronize the store of a new trader more locally situated. However, despite these close transactional ties, most traders rarely socialized with their customer community.

The Zululand trading community linked people of largely European extraction. As few white people lived in close proximity, these links tended to be far-flung over great distances across which until recently, roads were practically non-existent. Despite this, the social strategies employed and the efforts made by traders to stay in contact with fellow traders and other permanent residents of Zululand was an important part of their lives. As with most societies, these aggregations created a basis for meeting and exchanging ideas as well as extending horizontal systems of security which mitigated traders' reliance on their local communities. For traders, the social round provided a means of meeting potential spouses with similar backgrounds and world views.

Not all traders, predictably, saw eye-to-eye with their neighbours and colleagues. Those trading closer to towns could afford to be more discriminating, and were considered fortunate in being able to interact with a greater variety of people. In 1922, British Poet Laureate William Plomer and his father Charles took a fact-finding trip to Entumeni near Eshowe to decide whether to take over the store there. Plomer's mother Edyth enquired as to whether there was any 'white society'. Plomer wrote 'We had heard that there was a mission station a mile or so away, and that a few white farmers had settled here and there outside the Reserve.' Edyth's response to this was loaded. 'She folded up her needlework and put it away, like a Prime Minister putting away a map of Europe that wouldn't be needed for a long time' (Plomer 1984:151). Despite this, the family moved to Entumeni to trade. Plomer did not relate to their neighbours at all, seeking instead the company of the customers.

...of most of our other white neighbours (none of them very near) it cannot be said that their outlook was liberal, their treatment of the blacks good, or their behaviour to one another polished...We did not need these people in any way, either for our livelihood or for social

intercourse, but when we first arrived, one or two of them hoped to batten upon us, imagining that we should be naïve enough to grant them credit. (Plomer 1984:158)

He describes a particularly disingenuous visit by neighbouring farmers which turned out to be an excuse to inspect the Plomer's legendary pit latrine, known as 'The Pagoda'. After this, relations were strained; the neighbours passed judgment and seemingly the Plomer family was deemed far too high and mighty for the lowly farmers living in their area (Ibid:159).

This chapter interrogates the position of the trader in communities using evidence of a material nature, given the inarticulate position of the customers, and the centrality of the store to the forging of social connections. It then investigates the links that traders made in their social spheres, extending the obvious commercial roles which connected them with their customers, to ones of a more voluntary social nature. Through the physicality of the building as well as anecdotes and stories, this chapter seeks to explore the value of these links, and the part that they played in sustaining the trading community over great distances. These ties between traders, travelers and magistrates create a thick net of legend which celebrates remoteness, hardship, hard work and good times, contributing to the formation of identity and reinforcing nostalgia. This chapter discusses the different social communities of the Zululand trader, identifies some of the main methods of contact, both static and mobile, and assesses whether these still exist in a very different, globalized society.

- **The trading store building as an extension of community space**

All of these social interactions occurred in and across space, and were infinitely connected to it, which suggests that the space itself can become a point of departure for the examination of these relationships. Furthermore, a central challenge was the inability to valorize the trading store and its relationships from the inarticulate perspective of the customer, in contrast to the patriarchal authority combined with reciprocal interdependence described by traders.

The dearth of operating stores and the necessary reliance on historical and oral information suggested employing a method that could scrutinize spatially how the original traders were situated in the landscape of the 'other', and the degree

of acceptance or rejection that this indicated. This position assisted in assessing critically the level of 'colonization' carried out by traders in establishing their stores at the 'frontier' in Zululand. The store building and its trading floor is thus a physical point defining space, from which the different forms of social engagement emerge.

Apart from descriptions in the ZLDC report, there is little information about the early stores. Few plans of them exist and rural areas were largely exempt from official plans submission until recently. Some traders such as Rutherford and Irons have photographs, but these are purely documentary. They rarely give any sense as to the use and relationship of spaces that comprise the structure, or those components which aid in informing the implication of the trader in the community. This suggested comparative assessment, examining the architectural language and consequent relationship through other contemporary plans.

The advent and increased availability of corrugated-iron sheeting at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was revolutionary in both the provision of lightweight, weatherproof and pest-resistant roofing, as well as prefabricated wood-and-iron buildings.<sup>117</sup> A preliminary tool for analyzing the trading spaces is the aforementioned HV Marsh *Wood-and-Iron Catalogue*. This was available during the height of Zululand settlement between the ZLDC in 1905 and the end of World War I, which heralded the new immigrants such as the Rutherfoords. HV Marsh was a local catalogue firm which manufactured for regional conditions and cultures, and thus is relevant in this context.<sup>118</sup>

Countering the prefabricated layouts of the Marsh Catalogue, plans from Dennis Radford's 1997 work on the Maritzburg Cottage are used as control examples. Such settler vernacular buildings in the urban areas would have been the

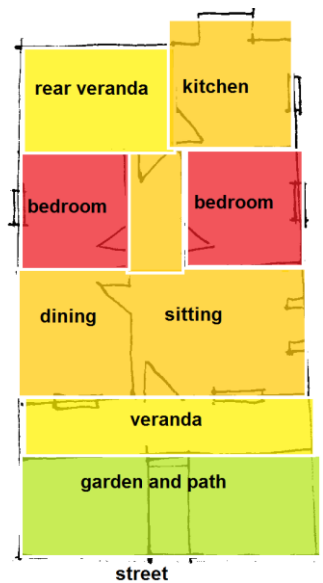
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<sup>117</sup> 'Although corrugated iron sheeting was available in the 1850s, there are references to its use on roofs as early as 1854, it does not appear to have come into general use until the 1860s...Initially it was probably quite expensive and so was sparingly used' (Radford 1997:21).

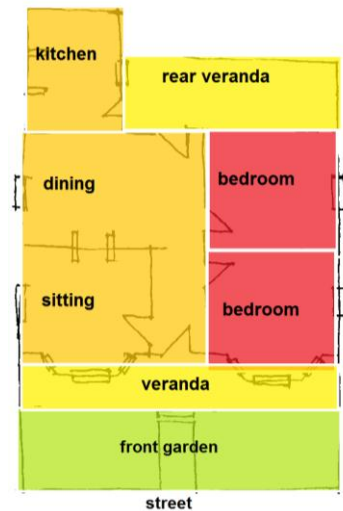
<sup>118</sup> The success of these Wood-and-Iron buildings was enough to produce the 4<sup>th</sup> edition of the Marsh Catalogue. HV Marsh was a Pietermaritzburg-based manufacturing company. In the introduction to customers in 'the four provinces of South Africa, Rhodesia and Basotholand,' HV Marsh notes that 'To those situated away from towns this class of Building particularly appeals, for not only is the cutting out and framing done here at our Works, thus enabling the erection to be easily undertaken by the labour usually available in the country, but everything is supplied complete, as specified, down to the last nail and screw.'



determiners for the planning and aesthetics in the Marsh Catalogue. The plans below are of cottages constructed in 1862 and ca.1905 respectively.



**Figure 5.1 Plan of 18 Shepstone Lane  
Pietermaritzburg circa 1862  
(Radford 1997:24).**



**Figure 5.2 Plan of No. 14 North Street  
Pietermaritzburg circa 1905  
(Radford 1997:24).**

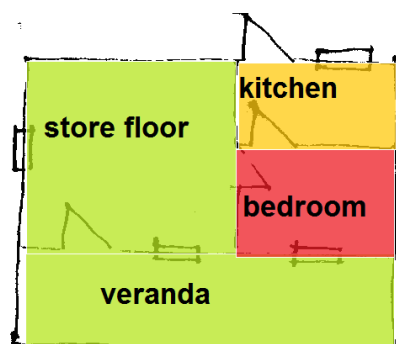
In both examples a veranda (yellow) dominates the front and rear façades. The living spaces are grouped tightly around a central passage which may form part of a room. Inside and outside spaces are clearly separated, as well as public (green) and private (red). This hierarchy can be further reduced: the public space is the street, coloured in green. Since all properties were fenced or walled, the garden itself and the path and possibly the veranda would have been a semi-public space. Movement into the house would progress into the semi-private spaces coloured in orange and finally the private spaces in red. Radford has little to say about the functions of these verandas, rather describing more fully the material resolution of the building (Radford 1997). These houses contribute to an historic and contemporary streetscape and rather than acting as isolated structures devoid of urban fabric such as rural stores, they form part of a referential replicated mass.

The scale of these two dwellings is largely informed by the roof, since truss and rafter spans were determined by available timber, usually Oregon pine which had been imported as ballast for ships. The masonry-derived structural aesthetic and principled Victorian precedent was manipulated for replication in wood-and-iron which was distributed through the Marsh Catalogue. It is vital to remember that the practically functioning veranda in these urban cases was the

rear veranda, whereas the street-facing one was ornate and embellished in late Victorian fashion. Although it was largely aesthetic, resembling the whimsy of the veranda in Papworth's 'Cottage Ornè' (Papworth 1818), its function was to separate the public street and the private house.

The five plans of 'country stores' in the Marsh Catalogue (Figures 5.3-5.7) reveal a different approach. Trading stores generally have a central open space which is used as the trading floor and is accessed from the veranda. Added to this core function are tacked-on appendages such as offices, storerooms and residential apartments, depending on the scale of the option chosen. Often as prosperity increased and traders had established themselves, they constructed a new house, continuing to use the wood-and-iron building purely for commercial purposes. The new houses were close by the store, but not necessarily part of the specific public store space. This separation of public and private space was both necessary and pragmatic, given the round-the-clock social expectations of the traders and their staff. Many of these buildings operated as such until they were outlawed in the 1950s. Other buildings would be constructed as the need arose, specific to each site and each situation, depending on the nature of the store, its position and its customers. The now virtually abandoned complex at Umvoti Slopes near Wartburg at one time consisted of a trading store, butchery, a house, a post office and stables.

As already stressed, these standard plans do not replace those countless stores constructed of other vernacular materials, most of which have disappeared.



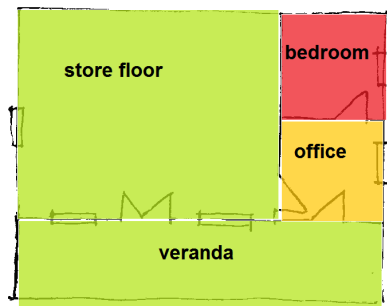
**Fig 5.3 Marsh Catalogue Store no 179**

Store Design 179 (Fig 5.3) was the simplest option offered. Note the spatial balance between the size of the veranda and that of the store floor, the latter being a mere 15m<sup>2</sup>. The public space (green) leads directly to the semi-private space (kitchen-orange) and the private space (bedroom-red)<sup>119</sup> without any transition. This means that the trader is literally sleeping in the same zone as he is trading - he is

not even 'going upstairs' to sleep.

<sup>119</sup> In domestic architecture in Pietermaritzburg, this was not convention. Although the cottage designs above had sleeping spaces directly off the main living space, the buildings were set a standard footage away from the street; entry was through a gate, along a path and onto the veranda, creating a spatial hierarchy between public and private zones.

**Fig 5.4 Marsh Catalogue Store no 180**



Option 180 (Fig 5.4) has a larger trading floor with a bedroom and office. Here the balance between veranda and store floor space is still comparatively large. However, the shop floor is nearly four times bigger. A semi-private office directly accessed from the public shop provides extra business-related space. Note that ingress through double doors increased the perceived scale of the building.



**Fig 5.5 Marsh Catalogue Store no 181**

Option 181 (Fig 5.5) is another small store. Since the veranda is situated on the short elevation it is much smaller. However, it still creates 50% extra space for trading and other services. This example has a bedroom and sitting room, and a medium-sized store space. A single door leads into the store, and the bedroom is accessed through the sitting room creating a hierarchy of spaces from very public to semi-public to private.



**Fig 5.6 Marsh Catalogue Store no 182**

Option 182 (Fig 5.6) has a larger store floor and a truncated veranda. However, a rear veranda accesses the bedroom and office. This veranda as a semi-private space creates a hierarchy between the store space and the sleeping quarters.



**Fig 5.7 Marsh Catalogue Store no 183**

Option 183 (Fig 5.7) is the largest option and offers the benefits of a formal dwelling. The size of the store may be smaller than Option 182 but it allows for a series of wrap-around inter-leading living spaces. Whereas a set of double doors leads into the store, a single door leads into the sitting room from the veranda. This defers the primary entrance to the store and simultaneously indicates that public access is from the veranda, suggesting that the trader shared much of his/ her private life with the general public, and could not shy away from the community being implicated by position. A kitchen veranda provides semi-private space.

Scrutiny of the Marsh Catalogue indicates trends in living spaces which, when compared with urban examples contemporary with it, defines the architectural typology of the trading store. It illuminates the differences between it and urban domestic architecture. As a system, ordering buildings through the Marsh Catalogue was successful in its expediency. By examining the vernacular architecture<sup>120</sup> of the wood-and-iron buildings more empirically and comparing the prefabricated stores with cottages from the same catalogue, indications of relationships between building spaces can be ascertained.

The veranda is a space common to cottages and stores. In the table in Fig 5.8 below, the areas of four of the smaller Marsh Catalogue 'cottages' (no's 114, 116, 121 and 136) are compared with those of the trading store options. Using the dimensions of the main building, the store and the veranda as provided in the catalogue reveals that the latter provided a large amount of extra 'real' space for the trader.

Catalogue option (Marsh)	Overall Dimensions in square metres	total in square metres	Size of store in square metres	total in square metres	Size of veranda in square metres	total in square metres	Veranda as a ratio of total	Veranda as a ratio of store
114	9.15x5.4	<b>49.41</b>	Three room cottage		2.1x9.15	<b>19.22</b>	<b>39%</b>	
116	9x5.7	<b>51.3</b>	Three room cottage		2.1x9	<b>18.9</b>	<b>37%</b>	
121	8.13x7.43	<b>60.36</b>	Four room cottage		7.43x2.13	<b>15.82</b>	<b>26%</b>	
136	7.95x10.2	<b>81.09</b>	Five room cottage		10.2x1.95		<b>19.9%</b>	
179	6.9x5.5	<b>37.95</b>	3.9x3.68	<b>14.35</b>	6.9x1.83	<b>12.63</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>88%</b>
180	10.28x8.03	<b>82.54</b>	5.85x7.35	<b>42.99</b>	10.28x2.18	<b>22.41</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>52%</b>
181	5.85x9.45	<b>55.28</b>	5.85x4.05	<b>23.69</b>	5.85x2.13	<b>12.46</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>52%</b>
182	7.35x9.83	<b>72.25</b>	7.35x4.95	<b>36.38</b>	7.35x2.18	<b>16.02</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>44%</b>
183	9.45x10.73	<b>101.39</b>	5.8x5.8	<b>33.64</b>	9.45x2.13	<b>20.13</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>60%</b>

**Figure 5.8: The relationship of veranda to store space and the total size of the building: the 'Country stores' depicted are those numbered 179 through 183 (Author)**

In the smallest trading store (No 179), the veranda comprises 88% of the total building size. This is significant, suggesting that the veranda was intended to operate as an external circulation space for customers *in lieu* of available

<sup>120</sup> Although wood-and-iron buildings have their origins in MacFarlane's and other foundries in the Victorian Industrial period, they are regarded as a settler vernacular due to their success in the colonies (Watson in Oliver v2 1997:1080-11).

internal trading space. This function is highlighted, since the ratio of veranda-to-store space is consistently above 40%. Thus the veranda as a ratio of the total structure for the stores at least, does not drop below one-fifth of the available space. Significantly, the last two options, Nos. 182 and 183, have a small service veranda at the rear in addition to the main veranda on the front.

This comparison can inform the following observations:

- The veranda serves as a practical extension of the trading space, containing customers and offering shelter, as well as assisting by climatically controlling the interior. It occupies a substantial portion of the footprint of each building.
- It is impossible to interpret non-empirical information such as the function of the veranda as an interstitial space between the 'world' and the 'comfort and containment' of the store. However, there is an undeniable movement from release to constriction (space to containment) and *vice versa* (containment to space) passing each way through the transitional space of the veranda.
- In most of the cottages examined in Figure 5.8, the veranda leads either into a 'public-private' hallway or into a lounge. As noted, the process of approach to a private urban dwelling passes through a series of layers: entrance through a gate, down a path, and access across a veranda. Thus, when entering a private urban dwelling via a veranda, when the front door is reached, the relationship is already more intimate.
- In the store options above, the immediate ingress into private spaces diminishes the layers of approach common to the urban dwellings of the time. There is little process of arrival in leaving a very public space to enter a private space. This immediacy suggests that the trader's private life was not spatially removed from his/her public life. This constant availability is corroborated by traders who still live and work in the same place; unless the door is locked, you are always needed.
- With time and the passing of generations, this spatial distance appears to have become more learned, more described and more intended. Traders have alternative spaces with appropriate connotations in which to discuss private issues or business with customers. Dedekind, Morrison and Aadnesgaard all attest that those spaces which accommodated the

more intimate dealings with customers, such as legal advice and access to accounts, were either carried out in the office or on peripheral veranda space. On exceptional occasions, customers were invited into the living area of the traders, an action that would be rarely reciprocated. Thus, it can be inferred that the early traders, by dint of the immediate access into personal spaces as indicated by the planning of the stores in the Marsh Catalogue, were implicated in and exposed to the community.

- The diagrams depicted display the provision of a moderate level of privacy, much less than would be deemed acceptable in a Victorian or Edwardian household, let alone a Zulu *uMuzi* homestead.

The mutual ownership of the store space and the realization that the trader lived largely in the realm of his customers can be contextualized by the following quotation from Christopher Alexander,

No building ever feels right to the people in it unless the physical spaces (defined by columns, walls and ceilings) are congruent with the social spaces (defined by activities and human groups). (Alexander 1977:941)

It is evident that trading stores as social spaces do not reflect elements of Zulu social or material culture at any level. They construct new mutual spaces, as architecturally and politically non-partisan structures, that generate their own culture of occupation. Perhaps it is this total otherness, the possibility to act out a different life in an alternative space' free from the constraints of culture and tradition, that entrenched the concept of the trading store and its implicitness in communities.

- **Daily social interactions and responsibilities**

David Irons had emphasized ‘You must come to the store on pension day, it is really humming.’ Pension days, and the hawkers market that follow them, are held on specific days of the month. The pension money is not necessarily collected at the store itself, rather the store is a landmark at which the pension payout trucks arrive and park with their machines. Because of this, both the store and the hawkers benefit from the readily available cash on pension day.<sup>121</sup>

Maureen Ndlela and I had taken an initial trip down onto the Makhathini Flats to find Tshongwe Store, some 25km from Ubombo along a bad dirt and medium gravel road. The land here is sandy and ill-watered, yet it is home for many people as along this road scores of homesteads hide in the bushy thicket. The hamlet of Tshongwe is located at an intersection of roads leading north to Phelindaba and west to Mbazwane. The first and most obvious store that we approached was run by a Muslim trader who directed us to the old store which is hidden amongst trees across the road. On this day there were few people around. Surrounded by shade, with a couple of elevated rainwater tanks,



**Figure 5.9: Tshongwe Store (Author 2008)**

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<sup>121</sup> People use cards to collect their old age, disability and child support pensions. The authorities verify the identity of the card-holder with fingerprint identification as many people collecting pensions are illiterate.

Tshongwe Store appears as little more than a *spaza*. Characteristically Modernist, it has a veranda and advertising on the gable end. The veranda leads into a small room in which the walls are hung with goods for sale, bicycle tyres, umbrellas and fan-belts. In the centre of the shop sits a single double-loaded shelving unit, and around two sides of the store runs an old counter on which two tills sit. Behind this counter is Bruce Mafuleka, a young Ubombo native who runs the store for David Irons. Speaking excellent English, he confirmed that the next pension day would be on 13 August. On enquiring why such an articulate young man would be running the shop at Tshongwe, Mafuleka replied that although Ubombo is his home, he finds it a 'little rural' and would prefer to seek work in Durban closer to his brother.

My husband Alan and I return on the appointed day. A two-and-a-half hour journey from St. Lucia on good tar with sand the last few kilometres gets us to the store. After a long stretch of empty roads, there is sudden activity. Towards Tshongwe, lines of women queue at the itinerant standpipes, filling up 25 litre plastic drums to take home. The road is thronged with pedestrians walking towards Tshongwe on their way to pension day. We pass rusted 'Zululand *bakkies*' held together with wire, plastic sheets in the windows. With the aid of *bushveld* mechanics they doubtless have many years of service ahead.

Tshongwe is mayhem. We have to drive with care as people fill the road, children darting between them. Some of the women wear sarongs of Swazi and Mozambican origin and many carry packages on their heads. We park inside the enclosure next to David Irons' elderly Ford pick-up. A toolbox is lodged in the back of the truck, and the loading bin has rusting sides and wheel arches. Alan and Irons briefly discuss its merits: 'Hell, these old Ford Drifters go and go and go!' Irons then whispers conspiratorially:

'There are people here selling *isibulala* – 'two step', you know. You know 'two step' – two little pellets which are intended as rat poison, but we all know why people buy it.<sup>122</sup> I haven't seen the peddlers today, but they have been around often before. It goes only for ten rand – there are fewer foreigners, you know, since the xenophobia; there were lots, Mozambicans, Ethiopians, all of them, now not so many. I'll send you around with Jacob; he'll be good for the questions.'

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<sup>122</sup> This is used as a cheap poison to kill people.



He hurries off to find Jacob, not before casting a cursory eye over the sacks of maize meal stored in the shipping container under the trees. Elderly women sit in the shade next to the container, resting before they travel home, perhaps waiting for a lift in the back of a decrepit Zululand ‘*bakkie*’. They are guarding huge bundles of *ilala* palm-fronds (*Hyphaene natalensis*), a versatile material used for thatching roofs and weaving baskets and many other goods.

Alan and I wander around. Whereas the pension market at Msinga straddles a hot tarred road, this one is situated under *Acacia* and *Albizia* trees which provide ample shade for the many stall holders of the hawker’s market. Despite this shade, towards midday many people begin to erect cheap gazebos and beach umbrellas, bashing them into the ground with a handy stone. To the right of the market is a ramshackle timber structure, a popular place as the noise emanating suggests. Irons warns darkly that this is the ‘bar’, at which palm wine or *uBosulu*, is being consumed in large quantities amidst much jollification. Ambling through the market, the expected Chinese-manufactured goods and Oxfam bales of second-hand clothes are evident. As at Msinga and other southern KwaZulu-Natal markets, there is lots of food; deep fried *amaGwinya*, Russian sausages nestled between slices of white bread and *amadumbies* or African sweet potatoes. Unlike in southern markets, battered fried fish comes from the Phongolo River, ‘another small river nearby’, as well as from Lake Sibaya, some distance away. The fish is usually cooked the night before the market. Local produce such as yams or *mDumbulu*<sup>123</sup> and small fleshy tubers which look like walnuts, known as *amaZibu* are to be found. There is the expected *muthi*, medicinal leaves to be boiled for tea, some locally grown onions, and the ‘hot meat’, *shisa nyama*,<sup>124</sup> ready for the desired portion to be sliced off and cooked on the glowing coals. There are locally made goods such as *iCansi* sleeping mats with a typical Tsonga coloured detail and *uVovo* beer strainers and winnowing baskets. A striped gazebo is festooned with distinctive ‘Fasco’ cloth in the emerald green, royal blue and white favoured by the Nazarites. Some stalls sell Swazi and Mozambican printed cloths, one of which bears a beaming Jacob Zuma, the South African president elected in 2009.

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<sup>123</sup>CC Foxon noted that *mDumbulu*, or arrowroot was grown in his General Report on amaTongaland (Maputaland) in 1897. Most of the crops mentioned above were itemized (Blue Book for Native Affairs 1898:C51).

<sup>124</sup>Literally ‘hot meat’ – choose your cut from the carcass hanging from the tree, pay, rent a knife to cut it off, and then ‘*braai*’ it on the fire provided.

Large heaps of toilet paper 'seconds' lie next to a car. The inner cardboard tube of the toilet roll is half covered, in effect, half a roll of toilet paper. Dye in small, bound parcels is possibly used to colour the *iLala*-palm products, and strands of wire bound into hoops are used, no doubt, for '*bhopa*'ing (tying/fastening) anything and everything, including derelict Zululand 'bakkies'.

Being the only white people in the crowd, we are easily located by Jacob Zikhali. However, Irons leads him and another man through the throng, introducing 'Jacob' and the '*umFundisi*', the Salvation Army pastor. Zikhali and *umFundisi* Gumede divulge that Irons's Zulu name is 'Mpande'. Alarmed, I ask what possible relation David Irons could have to Mpande kaSenzangakhona, Shaka's distinctly portly half-brother and Zulu king in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. Zikhali declares, 'we say a person who is fighting hunger is *Mpande wendlala*' - alluding, we hope, to David's slender physique. Zikhali is short and portly whilst the *umFundisi* is slight, elderly with glasses, and has drooping pierced earlobes, relics of an archaic tradition. I comment on the Gumede surname, saying '*Hawu*, aren't you one of the Qwabe people and a long way from home?'<sup>125</sup> Gumede says, 'No, we are different to those Gumedes, in fact we marry Qwabe women.' Zikhali laughs at the response, 'Gumedes will marry anything'. Both speak excellent English, although much of the initial greeting was carried out with Alan respectfully speaking in Zulu.

On pension day, Zikhali travels a distance in his *bakkie* to collect some of the vendors surrounding us, charging them a fee for carriage. There are still some foreigners he says, indicating across the dirt road to the few stalls there. 'That's where they are' he notes. There are Mozambicans and Ethiopians particularly. He corroborates Irons' theory that recent xenophobic violence has impacted on these markets. Some hawkers have distinct identities. Vendors are generically known as '*abaDayisa*', 'those who sell', whilst clothes sellers are specifically termed '*uNgagame*'. The hawkers market that follows the pension queue used to be organized by a committee which has since disbanded, and now 'they just happen'. We ask if the store owners complain about hawkers. Zikhali replies that they used to until they realized that these hawkers were customers.

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<sup>125</sup> This comment was made before it struck the author that Gumede is a prolific name in this part of KwaZulu-Natal, and highlighted the ethnographic limitations of Bryant (Bryant:1929).

The pension payout is held inside the community hall across the road, and by now the government pension officials have moved on. Despite this, the market will carry on trading until 5pm, when the last vendor packs up. The pension payout and its hawkers market will return on the second Thursday of next month. Very rarely does the weekday of the pension payout change. Should it, the date of the next payout is reflected on the pension receipt. Tomorrow, says Zikhali, the payout is at Mboza at 'Madonela', the place of Donald. 'Who is this Donald?' we ask, wondering if it may have been a trader. 'Oh no! It was named after a local *iNduna*, Donald Mhlongo, it is Donald's place'. At this point an elderly one-eyed man comes to greet us, and is introduced as an *iNduna* in this area. He is one of three that oversee business at Tshongwe. As this store intersects three separate wards, Irons is accountable to three tribal groups.

A major part of the conversation is dominated by Zikhali. Iron's rationale for introducing us is revealed when, after a short silence he says 'I understand that one of you is, ah, how should I say this, related to someone who works in the Scorpions' (Special Anti-Corruption Unit). Rather than engage with this directly I intimate that this is true, given the controversial character of the organization at the time and particularly of its prosecution of Jacob Zuma. I indicate that I work with the Scorpions, although it is Alan who continues the conversation and offers advice in Zulu. This approach lessens culpability, perhaps, as Alan operates as the translator rather than the advisor. The issue is one that plagues communities throughout South Africa. Money awarded for community projects by national departments is misappropriated by local authorities, swallowed up in the guise of feasibility studies and the like. Irons acts as the appointed financial officer for this community organization, which aims to empower people with a variety of projects ranging from apiaries to cattle-keeping. Repeated reports to ombudsmen and complaints to official departments have not borne fruit. As active community leaders trying to better the lot of their local poor and marginalized, these men are aggrieved by a common problem.

We wander around further. A lady selling clothes has amongst them the same *isiGege* loin skirts as worn by virgins in Msinga, known here by the same name.

There are huge cast-aluminium cooking pots. 'Nine hundred!' the man selling them shouts. At the *iLala* palm wine<sup>126</sup> stall there is much merriment, scores flock around wanting a rand or two to buy more wine. We get involved in all sorts of conversations. Alan's Zulu facilitates replies to 'where do we come from', and 'why do we not want any wine', and 'if we don't want any wine, then can they have some money?' One overbearing woman wearing fake designer sunglasses is particularly persistent in inveigling a couple of rand.

We seek refuge inside the store amongst a chattering mix of customers. The queue of people buying on account winds around the single shelf in the centre of the room and people use their feet to scoot baskets laden with bulk products along the floor in front of them as the queue advances. There are large bags of brown sugar, salt, long bars of soap and oil. One old man has a cooking ring for a Cadac gas stove. There are bags of dried beans, aluminium teapots, walls festooned with posters describing cattle anti-helminthics: 'Drastic Deadline' they declare. When people leave the store their till receipts are checked by a security guard. Each person who needs their purchase of a bag of maize meal delivered pays the (almost) R200, at the counter. This amount includes the cost of delivery. A chit is issued which is taken outside to Irons who is sitting in the front seat of his *bakkie* in the shade. Even though it is only August, it is hot. Irons tallies the sales with the stocks and co-ordinates the deliveries which this same *bakkie* will carry out to communities around Tshongwe for the next two days. It will take him 5 or 6 loads. 'I won't get caught inside the store' he says: 'I let my staff take that risk. Once I was behind the counter on a day like this and these guys came in firing an AK47. Lucky it didn't go off. I stay under this tree by my *bakkie* in case.'<sup>127</sup> 'When I get to the *kraals*', he continues, 'that's when they start to create confusion. These guys are masters in creating confusion. The one says this, then another guy butts in, and unless you focus, you get taken.' I ask Irons how he recruited the articulate and dependable Bruce Mafuleka, upon whom he relies heavily to run Tshongwe Store in his absence. Mafuleka had a

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<sup>126</sup> CC Foxon, General Report: 'In the neighbourhood of the Pelandaba kraal, and, it may be said, wherever the '*ilala*' or ivory palm abounds, very little cultivation is done, as the people live more or less on palm wine' (Blue Book for Native Affairs 1898:C51). He says that in some parts of Maputaland people tended to subsist solely on this, using the pith and fruit as food, the sap as wine, and the leaves 'for making all kinds and sizes of pretty, useful baskets,' and in the construction of huts (Ibid:C53).

<sup>127</sup> On this trip, Alan drove whilst I was lookout. One turns around if one sees anything suspicious, since the proximity to Mozambique means that this area is notorious for hijacking.

good recommendation as a clerk from Ellerines Furnishers, as well as good personal relations with local people. He was originally employed at Ubombo until Irons closed the store, then he moved down to Tshongwe. The women sitting in the shade with their bundles of *ilala* palm fronds climb into the back of a Zululand *bakkie*, slam the back of the canopy and disappear in the dust.

Irons is a critical component of his customer community. He acts as advisor, financial officer, and in this case, friend. Like his community peers, he has a network of connections which are summoned when necessary. The social links connecting him and his customers would be impracticable were he running a *spaza* or supermarket, or were he the detached owner of a wholesale business.

#### ○ **Personality**

The way in which the trader relates to his customers is paramount. Old traders say that personality is critical, and that if a trader is dismissive, unhelpful or perceived to be cheating, people are happy to walk miles to patronize a different store. Mutual dealings of respect and honesty between trader and customer as well as a certain involvement and implication in the community, is critical to the survival of traders in rural areas. Although he now leaves Tshongwe daily, returning home to the top of the mountain at Ubombo, David Irons participates in the affairs of his community. He retains his responsibility to his current customer community at Tshongwe, and his old customer community at Ubombo, assisting as he is perceived to have experience and often influence, being white.<sup>128</sup> In some ways, his distance has possibly made him more participant in the greater community. His customers accept his eccentricities, flattering him with a Zulu name relating to his physique rather than an insulting character reference.

‘Of the hundreds of stores and traders in Zululand, some stand out, either because they were charming people, or because they were eccentric, or in some cases downright rude and unpleasant’ (Ovens 1999:31). Ovens continues to describe how such behaviour led to the demise of a store,

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<sup>128</sup> Other traders concur. Heinz Dedekind at Elandskraal says that people exploit his ethnicity. If they call an ambulance, it does not come. If they complain to Eskom that there is no electricity at the school, nothing happens. If a white man calls to complain, it gets done.

....the manageress, a Norwegian, was the most unpleasant, foul-mouthed woman I have ever come across. Many representatives refused to even enter the store. It was eventually closed down in 1954 when all the other stores in the area were booming. (Ibid:36)

This tenuous balance sometimes takes a little time to achieve. Plomer comments of his patrons at the Entumeni Store. The Zulu customers,

...understood that we didn't intend to exploit or take any unfair advantage of them and that we liked them and enjoyed their company...the place became almost like a club, and Africans of all ages and both sexes would drift in for a gossip. (Plomer 1975:158)

Specifically, he mentions an elderly customer.

....Nkiyankiya. Bare-legged, wearing nothing but a leather loin-cloth and an old army tunic, he had such natural style that no grandee dressed by the best sort of London tailor could have looked more distinguished. His shopping was done by his womenfolk and he evidently came to Entumeni because he liked talking to me. I shall never forget his half-affectionate, half-ironical salutation 'Sa'u-bona, umtwana ka Kwini Victoli! (Greeting, child of Queen Victoria!'). (Ibid:158)

Penelope Harvey refers to the Andean trader being similarly dependent on the goodwill of the customers, and the extraordinary social demands on them. 'It is not a business for somebody who needs a cash flow' she declares. The relationships that have to be constituted, for Harvey, occupy much time 'The sociality required for successful trading is as demanding as that required for completing the agricultural cycle. (Harvey 2001:204)

Her description is evocative of the Zululand traders closing their stores for lunch, and eventually, when they had the money, building a house distant from the store. Peruvian traders she found, suffered similar pressures, and had to lock themselves up in a 'veritable fortress' to escape the constant demands of their community. Today, Hugh and Leanne Morrison feel the same way at the luxury Makakatana Lodge: 'We keep way out of the goings on at the Lodge. Foreign visitors just have no respect for personal space'.

## ○ Services

The variety of services trading stores provided was boundless. William Plomer tells of unusual exchanges in which customers brought in sorts of items.

The Zulus brought us their handiwork or their money, their labour or their produce – maize, millet, chickens, eggs, vegetables, hides, skins, and so on – and could obtain in exchange an extraordinary variety of merchandise. It ranged from ploughs, lanterns, textiles, parasols, and musical instruments, many kinds of food and clothing, to love-philtres, aphrodisiacs, and *cache-sexes*, the last named in assorted size' (Plomer 1984:156-157)

Of his time, he refers to the people as being primitive, telling of playing a Zulu record on a gramophone and the joy and the horror that this would entail (Ibid:156-157).

As discussed in the previous chapter, traders had a variety of necessary business adjuncts which were service related. It was in their interest to assist customers in gaining access to their stores. Given the geography of Lake St Lucia, the Morrisons ran a ferry across the lake at a narrow gap known as Brodie's Crossing. Originally this boat was rowed by one of their staff, who would strike out at specific times across the hippo and crocodile-infested Lake, and return with paying customers from the other side. These people from across the Lake, Ursula Morrison and her son Hugh agree, were light-skinned, almost Arabic, and some even had freckles. This ferry service ran for years, the boat eventually getting an outboard motor and then a lifeboat.<sup>129</sup> It ceased once the people that it ferried were removed to create a state forest and game park.

Ursula Morrison admitted that the services they provided at Makakatana and Nyalazi were less extensive than at other stores. They offered standard services such as the 'sewing boy',<sup>130</sup> operating from the veranda. He lived on the property and operated independently from the shop. He never paid rent, and he is considered to have provided a vital service to the customers. In the days before mass-produced Chinese clothing and when sewing machines were a luxury, he would take the bolt of cotton, rayon or *shwe-shwe* cloth from the

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<sup>129</sup> Some storekeepers would assist a local person to run a ferry as a going concern. Dedekind at Elandskraal has handed over the service to a local entrepreneur who runs it successfully, benefiting himself, the storekeeper and the customers.

<sup>130</sup> 'Sewing boy' was the name for the male tailor situated outside the shop. The sewing was done using old treadle Singer sewing machines. Most tailors were Nyasa (Malawian) Muslims.

women who had purchased it in the store and run up their dresses for them, or alter ready-made clothes that they had bought. Dawn Irons recalls that at their store at Ubombo, the 'sewing boy' would make graduation gowns for the nurses at the Bethesda Missionary Hospital. Cobblers worked on the verandas. Some stores had further ancillary services. 'In front of most stores on the veranda sat the bangle maker, flat on the floor with his legs stretched out. Between his legs was a small grooved block of wood and the tip of a cow's horn'. Cyril Ovens describes local people who would fashion wire into anklets 'while you wait' (Ovens 1999:22).

One of the most enduring elements of the rural trading store is this veranda, whether as a wrap-around structure producing deep shade or as a transitional space between the shelter of the store inside and the harsh sun and driving rain outside. As an integral part of this regional architecture, the veranda is used for many different functions. Heinz Dedekind at Elandskraal tells of women coming out of the valley to give birth on his store veranda, knowing that not only will Dedekind help directly, but he will call the ambulance if needed.

Whilst standing on the hot, north-facing veranda at Masotsheni Store, Geoff Johnson points at an *ad hoc* concrete block structure situated next to the two petrol pumps. The building grows out of necessity and not always in the most aesthetic manner. 'That is where the mill is' he says. 'Ah, so you mill as well' I exclaim. Women bring their maize to the trading store to be ground instead of slaving away using grinding stones at their homesteads. Many other traders assist similarly. On my first arrival at Elandskraal Store, Dedekind had his sleeves rolled up, proffering a floury hand since he was busy mending the large rollers on his mill. Customers who lead donkeys laden with sacks of maize out of the valley pay R2.00 per bag for it to be ground. In addition to grinding maize, many traders will store it for their customers until needed.

Personal demands on the trader are sometimes greater. Dawn Irons tells a story about an old man in Ubombo who had died. His family requested that the Ironses take his corpse down to Mkuze so that he could be buried. They loaded his body in the back of the *bakkie* and trundled down the sinuous road to Mkuze town, after which they stocked up with provisions at Boxer wholesalers. Not a



soul would buy any of the food that came up the hill in that load, or any food that arrived in subsequent loads. 'But why?' Irons asked the customers. 'Hawu! The *bakkie* is contaminated! You have carried a corpse in it and now you cannot take food in it!' Zulu custom considers pollution surrounding death seriously. Taboos dictate and restrict the day-to-day activities after the death of a family member, and once the body has been buried, a lengthy series of strengthening medicines must be employed (Krige 1962[1936]:163). A new truck had to be purchased in order to stock the store.

In a similar incident, two of their cattle were struck by lightning. David Irons thought it would be a good idea to dismember them and put them in the big chest freezers as meat for poor people in the community. This good intention came to naught. Despite being poverty stricken, and with an alarming rate of HIV infection, people would not eat this contaminated meat, nor would they eat anything else which was stored in the large chest freezers. Eileen Krige described how a person killed by lightning is considered differently from a person who died a natural death, to the extent that their remains are buried distantly in order to deflect the elements in future (Ibid:17). As a result the Ironses had to buy new freezers in which to store their stock.

Reciprocal relations are the primary means of security in a society which has rapidly become more aggressive. In the past personal security and crime are not highlighted as having been of concern at all. Traders say that there was little crime, and that people were safe. Skirmishes involving traders had occurred long before in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Thus, involvement in the odd isolated incident became more inflated with every retelling. Roy Rutherford relates a lengthy tale of a criminal targeting the 'post boys', operating in Maputaland. Hazel Ueckerman and Braatvedt describe a renegade religious fanatic at Nongoma. Jean Aadnesgaard tells of her mother being held up at the store at iNtikwe. These were isolated incidents and not a litany of common experience.

Today's worsening security situation sees storekeepers, however, becoming soft targets. They deal in cash and keep money on the premises. Mondi Store

at Creighton, one of the first stores we visited, had recently closed because the owner had been murdered.<sup>131</sup> The same occurred at Middledrift Store on the Tugela River which had been operating for well over a century, and run for decades by the Wilmore family. Michael Aadnesgaard was shot dead in his store at Msinga, whilst the Morrisons were attacked at Makakatana. Living and working in any remote area relies on a subtle balance of relationships to ensure personal security, and often even this is limited. Countless oral and historical accounts describe traders protecting communities, and how, in reciprocation, the customer community protected them.

Today, a major component of store operation is ensuring physical safety and security for staff and customers. Stephen Cope tells me to park my car at the back of the store behind the high fence. I am escorted there by an armed guard. Cope says that a few weeks previously, his security guard was shot dead outside the store. They called the police who arrived much later in a clear state of inebriation. With a sigh, Cope says that the driver was the least drunk of the attending officers as the others were all vomiting out of the window. This may be an exaggeration, but fact largely underlies the story.<sup>132</sup>

Ursula Morrison lives in a gated community. She feels the need for security keenly as she was attacked at Lake Store at Makakatana just before it closed. I had spent quite some time with her before this information emerged, told in a stage whisper as she was concerned about upsetting Jimmy Morrison sitting in his wheelchair. They had a dispute with the local Mkhwanazi chief, 'not a very nice man' she urged, and a powerful chief in the area. He had arrived at the store with a posse of men to discuss their claim on the land. Morrison maintains that this 'visit' turned into a robbery. She and Jimmy managed to escape and lock themselves into the office, and call for help. In a letter to the Morrisons, D.J. Potter, Deputy Director East, Natal Parks Board, wrote in July 1994,

I was horrified to learn that you two had been attacked last Thursday. There seems to be no values left in this world of ours when people such as yourselves, who have done so much for the community and who have never harmed a soul, are forced to endure such terrifying ordeals.

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<sup>131</sup> This store reopened in October 2010.

<sup>132</sup> Some years ago I had an accident at the next village at Tugela Ferry. On a Monday morning, I was hit head-on by a drunk driver, (ironically the local insurance salesman). As the car was undrivable, I walked to the police station where the officer on duty was drunk.

My experience with my late father, that to convince the older generation to take necessary precautions against such events is totally contrary to their beliefs, but I ask you to seriously consider this option as my experience with matters of security in remote areas is that you will remain a target of the ungodly. I was pleased to learn from John that, whilst you were badly shaken, you were not seriously physically harmed. Please look after yourselves. (Potter in the Morrison Letters)

Most traders interviewed spoke of many other issues and many other relationships before they described attacks or losses. The proprietor of Ismael's Store at Tweedie (outside of the study area and visited several times) did not volunteer information about being attacked. However, several local farmers said that the owners had been attacked in their store on a number of recent occasions. Ismael's Store is on a main route close to Howick town, and is in a busy part of the Natal Midlands. Similarly, Jean Aadnesgaard spoke of her mother's attack in the 1960's as a point of matter of fact, but only offered the more recent information about her son being killed in his store after some time.

Maintaining good relations with customers is vital. Stephen Cope recalls a recent Christmas in which a young man clearly overcome with alcohol and *dagga*, was harassing him in the adjoining 'bottle store', which he owns. 'This guy was stumbling round the store repeatedly calling *'umLungu'*.<sup>133</sup> He apparently carried on and on haranguing Cope, when eventually he stumbled outside and sat down. Cope says he was serving behind the counter when he heard a number of 'whoops'; it sounded like someone being beaten. On investigation he found this lad bloody and bruised. One of his customers did not appreciate the slurs and acted in retribution, carrying out what Cope refers to as 'bush justice'. To this day Cope has no idea who inflicted the blows on the inebriated man.

Jean Aadnesgaard's mother continued to run the iNtikwe Store after the death of her father. In about 1964 she was held up at gunpoint. A man whom she did not recognize came in to the store and asked for a specific cosmetic. When she bent down to get it he pulled out a gun and fired, grazing her on the shoulder then fled. No shrinking violet, Margaret Sutton instructed her staff to gather the horses and chase after the man. The chase ensued, following the fugitive along

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<sup>133</sup> A commonly-used uncomplimentary name for a white person.

the river through the steep valley of the iNsuzi. All the kraals along each bank, the Khanyile on the one side and the Dhlomo on the other, called out alerting the neighbours to give chase. Eventually, after the police were called, the man was caught. The policeman, a man named Strachan, was informed by the pursuers that 'he had to have official assistance to arrest the man'. Strachan apparently knew exactly what was going to happen. In waiting for the extra help he was giving them some time with the culprit. This thief was beaten by both the Dhlomo and the Khanyile to within an inch of his life, being remonstrated for attacking a woman who not only had the courage to live alone where she did, but rendered a vital service to the community.<sup>134</sup> 'Bush justice' is no new phenomenon. Significantly, Margaret Sutton was assisted by both the Khanyile and the Dhlomo communities that she served, the same people who paid their Hut Taxes on different days.

Cope relies heavily on local people for resolution of problems that stem from the community. For him, these relationships depend on communication through the appropriate hierarchies. When he arrived to begin trading, as a matter of courtesy he approached the *iNkosi* of the Mchunu, a religious man. Across the river is *iNkosi* Zondi whom he describes as a 'different kettle of fish', but since his territory lies across the river he does not have much to do with him.<sup>135</sup> Devolving the relationship occurs through the levels of hierarchy. Besides chiefs, other highly regarded members of the local community are deployed in resolving problems. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the local headmaster, Ben Mchunu, inherits a host of challenges, particularly those related to truancy.

Sometimes the customer community alerts Cope to theft by his own staff. A *kehla*, an old man, once 'dropped a quiet word in his ear' about one of his cashiers who he had observed stealing for some time. Many of Cope's workers are sole bread winners. The majority live locally and generally, in these tight knit communities, firing staff using accepted labour practice applicable in the cities is not appropriate, nor is it an option. Most incidents, Cope says, are more

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<sup>134</sup> It emerged that this man had murdered Mrs. Cowley at the Maxuma store, and had broken in to the store at Qudeni. Aadnesgaard said that the sad thing was that he was not an outsider as thought, but the son of a local preacher.

<sup>135</sup> This *iNkosi*, Mbongeleni Zondi, was murdered in February 2009 in a hit allegedly connected with the taxi industry.

appropriately dealt with by his Zulu managers in a relevant fashion. Each situation calls for its own solution in which tactics may be as simple as moving the staff member to a position in which they have no access to cash, meaning that there is less loss of face for the accused. In serious instances, a stark choice is offered. Either the staff member resigns voluntarily, or Cope will call in the police. The accused has a chance to think it over and usually chooses voluntary resignation, signing a letter of admission of guilt.

The social dynamic of the store is very carefully negotiated. Shrinkage and rising inflation limiting profits means that the operation of the 'Softs counter', selling smaller items, is about to change to a scanning system. This means that each staff member will be accountable for their own tills. To lessen shrinkage levels and to even out staff dynamics, workers are moved around the shop constantly. All of Cope's employees must be willing to bake bread, run tills and sweep the mess outside, inculcating multiple skill which act as a social leveler.

Of a district that has always relied heavily on its migrant men for income, Cope says 'the guys left here in the valley are *skelms*. They are no good to go off and get work.' Hard experience inculcates a suspicion of outsiders and a willingness to only deal with local people. Most traders say that violent crime is largely committed by people from outside their community, sometimes by a local person who has gone to the cities and returned with new unsavoury friends. For them, these cash-based stores are sitting ducks. In Msinga, local people let Cope know about a potential threat. If a strange car drives past the store more than once, Cope phones his friend Caroline in the Police Reaction Unit at Greytown, and provides her with a description of the car. He plays polo-crosse with her and is reliant to a large degree on this link for his extended protection, for as indicated, the local police are ineffective.

Finally, the trader's essential business was providing goods and service to communities. As mentioned, it was illegal for trading stores to sell guns and alcohol. For some this was an opportunity not to be missed. Marianne Mingay's family traded at Lundy's Hill in Natal, and she remembers hiding alcohol from the authorities under the floorboards. More sinisterly, the store at Gun Drift on the Eastern Cape border lived up to its name.

In the north, some traders exploited the permeability of the Mozambican border.<sup>136</sup> Rutherford describes visiting Kosi Store which was run for a time by a man named Bromwich. Because of the alcohol law, says Rutherford, the locals used to cross the border and buy alcohol from Goan traders in Mozambique, then cross back into Natal to get their food from the Kosi Store. Bromwich decided to capitalize on this trade route, using the services of a Goan across the border. One day, Rutherford arrived for an inspection of his store to find a large group of Africans sitting behind it, drinking glasses of wine. For legal reasons, this practice was curtailed immediately (Rutherford 2000:39).

## **5.1 Vehicles of social interaction**

Much of the discussion has centred on way in which the localized customer community centres on, and spreads out from, the trading store. The store offered a primary commercial focus, supplemented by extraneous activities which operated to the benefit of both the community and the trader.

However, other systems developed that tied the traders into a geographically extensive social round and which formed a support basis for *them*. Given their remote situations, for many remaining in contact with other white people in Zululand was a means of extending their security base both commercially and physically. These contacts were of two types: associations with groups that consisted of 'static' members, tied into trade or onto land, and who aggregated for social events on a regular basis. Such examples would be other traders, magistrates, and farmers. The other type were the 'mobile' contacts, those visitors that brought the news to the store as part of their round, such as the traveling salesmen, doctors, and in the case of Geoff Johnson, the mounted police.

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<sup>136</sup> 'The line must have been surveyed and eventually fenced and the Portuguese actually put up stone cairns at odd places which still stand today. There were various bits of writing on them in Portuguese which in time completely disappeared. Unless you were in view of one of those cairns, you would not know whether you were in Mozambique or not' (Rutherford 2000:68).

- **General social communities**

Few traders describe consistent social interaction with people in their immediate customer communities beyond the store and its myriad and inevitable responsibilities. Distance was maintained and mutual respect was kept through maintaining that distance. Hugh Morrison, living at Makakatana and running the luxury lodge there recently attended the wedding of one of his employees. His mother Ursula cannot remember attending similar ceremonies of customers.

Mostly, storekeeping was a full-time occupation, and randomly taking off weekends to visit and attend events was difficult. Again, Penelope Harvey's assertion that the life of the trader was as demanding as the agriculturalist is resonant (Harvey 2001:204). Traders found that they often lived according to their customer's demands, which were so great that they had to physically remove themselves, or occasionally firmly shut a door to escape. It is to be recalled that trading was not restricted to the physical stuff of the shop itself, but subject to constant ancillary demands which operated over a 24 hour period. When they did get away, it was of their own volition.

Distances were great and the roads were bad, making these journeys much longer than the few hours they take today. Travel was a means of spreading new approaches to trade such as 'self-service'.<sup>137</sup> Ursula Morrison says that 'about 40 years ago we bought a beach cottage at Ballito for holidays; keeping the store, we could never take many holidays and this was close enough for a quick getaway.' This investment afforded them the capital to retire in the luxury gated Zimbali Forest Estate today. Despite being tied for the most part to their stores, traders were inveterate travelers. For many traders this limited time meant that social interaction had to be a more structured round; church attendance for some, fervent participation in the Zululand Chamber of Commerce (ZCC) for others, local politics and generally lots of tennis.

Certainly, the Zululand Chamber of Commerce (ZCC) acted as a contact point for many isolated Zululand traders, and was a mechanism that connected coastal traders and those in the interior. Through this organization, strategic

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<sup>137</sup> See Chapter 5.

links were formed, as both Ursula Morrison and David Irons' mother Mrs. Ueckerman often declared, 'Oh, we knew of them through the Chamber'.

Significantly, the ZCC began as an organization connecting traders in Zululand, rather than other general businesses. Until the mid-1930s it was limited to Empangeni and the coastal zone, when a bid by Wilmot, a trader in the interior at Nqutu, called for affiliation. Eventually this was allowed. The members were reluctant given the consequent logistics such as distance and subscription costs. Some traders were more involved than others. Wilmot continued to be active in promoting links in central Zululand, and drove the process as related in a note in *Tales from the Past*,<sup>138</sup> unlike his neighbour Geoff Johnson, who says that he had little interest in the ZCC. He remembers that Wilmot continued to serve on the Chamber with, amongst others, Jimmy Morrison from Makakatana. Morrison was instrumental in setting up the Northern Zululand Chamber based at Mtubatuba and found the network to be a good position from which to attack issues of labour and racial inequity. Papers kept intact in the store document his involvement, and contain his collection of letters, minutes and agendas, as well as invitations to the 'Full Chamber' functions held in Empangeni.

Traders associated with others close by. Hazel Ueckerman knew many of the central Zululand traders through the ZCC, but her primary connectivity was limited to northern Zululand, intertwined with other families such as the Rutherfoords who traded down the hill at Mkuze. Certainly, her second husband Bob Ueckerman is mentioned often by Roy Rutherford in his memoirs as being a friend and accomplice in adventures. Geoff Johnson and his sister Dee tell of tennis and more tennis. 'At Masotsheni (store) the managers knew that on a Wednesday I may tell them that they must run the store, I was going to go and play tennis and they had to accept it!' Johnson would then drive to Nqutu for his game. Most magistracies in the towns had tennis courts, and Nqutu was no exception. Dee Hay remembers the wonderful social life. Nqutu even had a bowling green, built 'for the old guys' notes Geoff ironically. In a land and an era ruled by the horse, they speak of the illustrious Nqutu Gymkhana, in which it was a sin not to compete and even more of a sin not to go to the Gymkhana Ball afterwards. The women wore long ball-gowns and gloves, the men wore

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<sup>138</sup>The Zululand Chamber of Commerce Newsletter, June 1997.



suits and bowties, and they covered the floor of the clubhouse with French chalk to make the dancing smoother. The result, they remember, is that all the elegant dancers were covered in chalk by the end of the evening. These stories all resonate with the nostalgia of a bygone era in which the highlighted memories are all good, and reflect a time very different for the traders. It is the stuff of very personal memory as it tells the stories of youth and young relationships which have altered, matured and gone.

Today, Geoff Johnson plays the new tennis: golf. For this he travels to Dundee and spends a few hours trawling around the golf course. He tells of a recent encounter with a herd of cattle surreptitiously nibbling around the edge of the green, and shouting to the herders 'Oy! Get your cattle off my green!' Today, golf provides him with a similar structured and planned social round.

I ask Johnson whether he attended church. Does being the grandson of the venerable Archdeacon Charles Johnson leave little option? Does he attend St Augustine's, the flagship of the Charles Johnson mission stations? 'St Georges in Nqutu' he replies. It is a tiny church serving a small Anglican community, located further from Johnson than the Mission Church at St. Augustines that his grandfather built, which is only some two kilometres distant. Church is a weekly social round which provides a platform for discussion, exchange of ideas and information sharing, in addition to acting as a locus for like-minded people. It links a localized and close-knit community focused on a central building, unlike its far-flung parishioners. The Batemans are active participants in their local Catholic community. Florence Bateman commutes from her home in Kloof to Ballito, north of Durban, continuing with hospice work for the Mission of St. Vincent de Paul. She visits homesteads weekly to assist people with medication and counseling. Her fluency in Zulu and understanding of cultural and social norms, as well as her nursing training, contribute to her empathy and ability to communicate with the poor and sick. Likewise, her sister Jean spends much of her time and personal resources doing similar work in Phateni, the Location adjoining their farm. The responsibilities of Church and the trader become fused into what is certainly an old commitment. Their youth was permeated with the Catholic Church. Whilst at Dlolwana, the Batemans attended church on Sunday. This is remembered as 'quite a trek'. The uphill trip of only a few kilometres to

the Gonzaka Mission Church at Qudeni took 45 minutes by Land Rover. However, they remember this as an important routine which slotted into a family social round, as they would meet up with her sister Jean and her family. Hardship, as noted, is a distinct theme of the memories of these people. Although nostalgia is generally accepted as blocking out unpleasant events, these stories of bravado are an integral part of the litany of the trader, and are important in constructing a common identity of life as it was in Zululand.

The Irons family community initiatives are supported by church groups. Dawn Irons has a returning group of volunteers from abroad that assist in the construction and improvement of the orphanage that she runs. For three weeks of the year they are inundated with assistance. David Irons summons school children from his alma-mater St. Stithian's School in Johannesburg, who return annually to help out. Church formed little part of the Morrison's social life whilst living at Makakatana. Their store was closer to larger communities giving them greater social choice, and instead Jimmy Morrison invested much time and effort supporting local fundraising initiatives such as school football teams. Going through his papers it was not uncommon to find a 'thank you' letter for a R10 donation, in those days a reasonable amount of money. Although traders may be perceived to hide behind their doors and escape to holiday destinations, their commitment to their community is often more enduring.

Isolation meant that invariably traders' children attended boarding school. This was often not a simple exercise. Geoff Johnson tells of his varied experiences of schooling. The manner in which the memories are related may be conveyed with humour, but the subtext tells of frustrations for both the family and the children in order to comply with educational requirements. Initially they had a mobile governess who lived on his uncle's farm next door for six months of the year. Johnson and his siblings would ride the seven kilometres on horseback each day to school. For the next six months she would live with them, and his cousins traveled across to their farm. This ended when his parents bought Nkonjane Store and his father went off to war. The three Johnson children were sent off to boarding school at Holy Rosary Convent in Dundee. Here, he says, the nuns were as sweet as pie to the parents but utter ogres when the parents left and returned home. Dee Hay remembers that her brother used to cry and

cry when they left. The Convent was unsuitable and the children moved to Dundee Junior School, boarding with a local family. When it was time to go to high school, the boys attended the government schools of Murchiston and Maritzburg College in Pietermaritzburg. At 'College' Johnson met his future wife Vida Rodseth. Vida's parents traded in the Tugela Valley.

The 'Old Boys' community is important for Peter Rutherford. Both his father and grandfather attended Maritzburg College, and he is proud of the continuity. Despite this, his aspirations for his children were loftier. His sons attended Hilton College, a private school. Jimmy Morrison and his children all went to the government boarding school at Eshowe, but his grandchildren enrolled at Hilton College and St Anne's, in Hilton. Transition to private schooling with increased prosperity is common, not only in the trading community.

Social mobility suggests contextualizing these traders and their families in the greater discourse of 'elites' (Shore and Nugent 2002). The Calverley girls embarked on the Grand Tour of Europe, a practise inherited from the pre-Victorian period to supplement a liberal education and to prepare young middle and upper-class men for lives as professionals and aristocrats. In the colonies this practise persisted, reinforcing connections to a motherland which may in reality have been distant for the family concerned. However, it strengthened supralocal ties for the rural dweller, and the ability to co-exist in two worlds. Penelope Harvey discusses the *mestizo* traders in the Andes, noting that they straddle the worlds of the city and rural trade, and that: 'In many cases the families have come from outside in the past two to three generations, but they are not outsiders because of the various ways in which they have embedded themselves in the place...' They consider it vital that their children be educated in these towns, in the hope that connections made there will reinforce political ties (Harvey in Shore and Nugent 2002:85). Such 'upward mobility' was not always the case. Although Johnson's father had attended Michaelhouse, a private boys' school, 'Not for me!' he declared,

'My father went as he was the son of the esteemed Archdeacon Johnson and they made space for the son of a man of God! We had no money, it was war-time and my blind mother was running the store by herself.'

- **The static social community**

The people of KwaZulu-Natal come from a wide range of social and geographical backgrounds, and the families of traders, missionaries, farmers and magistrates that comprise this study group are no different. With the limited numbers of white people in Zululand, it was inevitable that most trading families would have at least one missionary and one magistrate in their lineage. The familiarity with a common lifestyle meant that sometimes they straddled the three positions of trader, farmer and missionary simultaneously. This ability to move fluidly between them was facilitated by an ability to speak Zulu, an understanding of the social landscape and their ability to accept and work within the geographical landscape. Geoff Johnson's grandfather, the esteemed Archdeacon Johnson, was better known for his church building efforts than for the conversion of souls. Johnson's father Mark was one of 11 children of the Archdeacon, and limited opportunities led him to take the decision to farm in the area in which he had grown up. At the beginning of the 1930s, the locust plague, the Great Depression and an outbreak of Foot and Mouth disease all compounded what for farmers was already a hard living, and Mark Johnson and his wife decided to start trading. Geoff Johnson remembers his father during the locust plague. 'He used to catch the locusts by hand and put them in a tin of paraffin to minimize the damage.'<sup>139</sup> Thus, within a generation, the son of a missionary had farmed and traded. Jean Aadnesgaard tells a similar story. Her father Louis Calverley was never a well man and he ran the family farm, whilst her mother Margaret was the 'real trader'. When he died in 1956 Jean Aadnesgaard helped by running the store at iNtikwe whilst her mother assumed the running of the farm. Aadnesgaard operated iNtikwe Store until 1958 when she married Olav, a farmer at Qudeni and the son of a local Norwegian Missionary. Since farming was unprofitable, they purchased Qudeni Store from the Titlestad family who had operated it for some time, and resumed trade.

It is important to bear in mind that these familial networks were usually reliant on a couple of generation's occupation of the land, a tenure which may have been through missionary work, farming or trading. Thus it was that the post-Second World War period was characterized by expansion for those traders

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<sup>139</sup> This method of dealing with the locusts is corroborated by Minnaar (1992) speaking of the locust plagues of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century in Zululand.

who had been in business for a generation or two and, more importantly, had survived the war years. The Calverley grand-daughters, by now members of an old and well-established trading family, left home at this time to set up their own trading businesses. This resulted in extending a family net of commercial operations over a greater area, and colonizing, in part, a sector of central Zululand.

These familial nets comprising farmers, missionaries and traders provided strong and secure links across large expanses of land. Johnson describes his generation entering trade. He took a year's break upon completing his schooling before returning to work in his father's store at Nkonjane. Shortly afterwards in 1950, he bought the store at Masotsheni. 'Why did you go into trading specifically?' Johnson replies frankly, 'I had business acumen'. His brother Don bought the Nkandi Store and re-established the Ntababomvu Store. Phindu store at Magogo near Qudeni was bought by his sister Dee and her new husband Ian Hay. Intermarriage extended these connections. Johnson's wife Vida was a Rodseth, a Norwegian missionary family who traded at Mfongosi in the Tugela Valley. Close by was the Calverley dynasty. The Aadnesgaards revitalized the old Titlestad store at Qudeni, Margaret Calverley continued to run iNtikwe, Florence and Barry Bateman operated the store at Dlolwana and Markham Calverley was proprietor of the Mazabeko Trading Store. Another sister, Louise Clark, ran the old store at Owens's Cutting.

As far as possible, family members assisted in daily operations. Based at Mkuze, Roy Rutherford's wife Maureen ran the stores with an impeccable record, and ordered and purchased goods which were railed from Durban. As a service to the community, Rutherford's sister ran the phone exchange. They operated an undertakers business and a guest house. At its peak, out of necessity, the Ndumu Group's two dozen stores were mostly managed distantly from the main store at Mkuze, although regular visits by the Rutherfords reinforced the connections between the storekeepers and the communities. For many years, they employed mixed-race couples to run these stores, in which the wife would keep the store and the husband would be the driver. As traders, the personal relationships that these couples had were intertwined with the

customers to a similar extent, reinforced by the greater connection to the Ndumu Group as a whole.

Although Indian traders are not the focus of this work, the social lattice established between them is worth noting. Padayachee and Morrell connect the different elements of trading enterprises within the Indian stores, saying that;

Links between the big merchants, the intermediate size traders and the *Dukawallahs* were augmented by smaller, regionally or locally specific trade networks. In the Greytown area, for example, the Muslim traders were in constant social, religious and economic contact. They assisted one another in all ways, perceiving themselves as a discrete community whose survival depended on such co-operation. Within families, trade ties were especially strong. Fathers frequently left their businesses to their sons, brothers assisted one another and uncles and nephews did likewise. (Padayachee & Morrell 1990a:3)<sup>140</sup>

The older trading families allude to a schism in the transfer of the businesses in recent times. The children of traders are usually more educated and are reticent to perpetuate the isolated tradition of storekeeping established by their forefathers. This is often understandable. Bruce Mafuleka at Tshongwe indicated a desire to move to the city, subscribing to the international phenomenon of rural-to-urban flow. Together with contemporary societies which are infinitely more mobile and connected, and the effects of globalization, urbanization has dragged the new generation away from the rural areas. This departure has removed an integral support system for many communities in that it has opened the way for a new trading culture which lacks the ethos and empathy that prevailed amongst the older 'pioneering' traders.

Few traders' children have the desire to return to storekeeping. Stephen Cope's perhaps nostalgic return to the historically fraught Msinga to trade is an exception. David Irons's children have scattered, as have the Batemans' and the Johnsons'. Most of the new generation is engaged in occupations which are an extension of the ethos of the trading store such as farming. Others work in benevolent professions. The new generation has established different paradigms of being 'in trade'.

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<sup>140</sup> This is still seen in some of the trading stores in the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands, where a number of generations may serve a customer simultaneously. A similar role was performed by the Zululand Chamber of Commerce which supported Zululand traders in an institutional fashion, whilst the family networks worked in a practical and related manner.

- **The mobile social community**

Despite the social and sporting aggregations, storekeeping isolated traders from people of their own culture. They were tied to their stores and their customers' needs and thus relied heavily on people who could travel to visit them. Commercial travelers, magistrates, Hut Tax collectors and doctors formed a mobile community that provided stimulation through the rounds of their visits.

Slow development characterized the extremely remote stations. The very gradual advent of effective road and rail networks meant that many traders could not gain ready access to the cities to purchase goods. They relied instead on 'commercial travelers', latter day '*smouse*' representing large merchant wholesalers who traveled the province plying their wares. This regular social conduit for the larger traders was an event which occupied large amounts of time, as they would travel their small empire from trading store to trading store ascertaining the specific needs and demands of each. Cyril Ovens recalls that,

Joe Chadford, Brown's rep in that area, would spend weeks at Mkuzi, going out to each store in turn every six-weekly cycle, often a great distance from Mkuzi over the tracks on the Makhathini Flats. This customer was so important to Browns that their sales manager, Tubby Martin, spent a couple of weeks at a time with the Rutherfoords helping his representative. (Ovens 1999:35)

Ovens worked as 'traveler' for Marshall Industrials. He once boasted he could remember the layout of every single store that he visited in Zululand, where the pots were and what cloth they sold.<sup>141</sup> 'Sample boys' or '*iSamphula*'<sup>142</sup> were usually young African men who accompanied the traveler, hauled the goods from the wagon or truck, rolled out the cloth for inspection, and acted as an assistant. Ovens elaborates on the close relationship that the traveler had with his 'sample boy', saying that he spent more time with his assistant than he did with his wife and family (Ovens 1999:2).

In the rear of the truck was his stretcher and a box which he referred to as his 'kitchen' in which he kept his cooking implements. At each country hotel 'there was only a large common room

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<sup>141</sup> The detailed nature of this information is evident in '*A Commercial Traveller in Zululand in the 1950s*', a monograph self-published prior to his death.

<sup>142</sup> According to Ovens, this was 'literally the one with samples' (Ovens 1999:1). However, this word is used for 'sample'. It is important to note that the Zulu language is fragmented, and slang depends much on area, interaction with migrant labour and Johannesburg, and the towns. Many words are direct Anglicisms and often lose their meaning through the passage of time.

which was used as communal sleeping and eating quarters for the sample boys and drivers. A driver was considered to be a far more qualified and senior gentleman than the ordinary 'sample boy'. The African quarters, under a corrugated iron roof, were often freezing in winter and hot as hell in summer. Washing facilities usually consisted of a cold shower. Often the rooms were alive with the sort of insect life it is best not to mention. (Ibid:2)

I mention the travelers: 'Joe Chadford' says Geoff Johnson, 'He must be long gone by now...speaking of coffins, I have a story about him.' Joe Chadford used to do the rounds of all these remote stores and remain for days at a time. He was staying with Donald Johnson at Nkandi Store when Johnson received a request from someone in the community for a coffin. So Johnson and Chadford embarked on a coffin shopping expedition to Dundee, predictably ending up in the pub of the Royal Hotel for long enough 'to get really pickled.' Along the dirt roads on the way home to Nkandi a necessary stop was made, after which Chadford elected to take a nap in the coffin loaded on the back of the van. Legend has it that Johnson, whilst driving, took a corner too wide, sending a sleeping Joe Chadford skidding off the back of the van in the coffin and landing none the worse for wear in a cloud of dust.

Ursula Morrison remembers one traveler in particular, a man they nicknamed Harry 'Last Bale' Morton. His moniker 'Last Bale' was earned. After he had presented cloth with a flourish, a trader who replied 'I'll think about it,' was rewarded with 'you had better take this one, as this is the last bale.' Rutherford remembered Harry Morton in his memoirs. In a chapter entitled 'Characters along the way', he says that;

..he was the representative for Randles Bros. and Hudson, the wholesale merchants who supplied us. He had been on the road a long time in Zululand and before the arrival of motor cars he used to do the trip by mule wagon. He had a wagon drawn by half a dozen mules with a tarpaulin over the top and under which he had his samples. At night the sides of the tarpaulin were let down and draped all around his wagon and he and his driver used to sleep underneath. (Rutherford 2000:36)

Ovens related a story of Morton wanting to visit a notoriously unsociable trader named Austin at Manguzi. As the stories went, Austin was not wont to entertain any commercial travelers and in fact actively discouraged them. However, on this occasion Morton and his ubiquitous two bottles of whisky were welcomed



with open arms and Morton, Austin and the 'Portuguese counter hand by name of Koster proceeded to have a ball' (Ibid:36). Roy Rutherford says that his father RH did not rely totally on the word of the travelers and would use this wariness as an excuse to travel to Durban to inspect the range of goods which the wholesaler provided. Oddly enough, these trips were usually scheduled to coincide with an international cricket match. When Roy Rutherford took over the operation he found it more beneficial for the traveler to visit each store separately, as each store manager knew the wants and needs of his particular customers. This was especially so with cloth which had wide regional variations in demand (Ibid:78).

The Morrisons, in turn, are mentioned by Ovens. Jimmy Morrison received passing mention, but Don Morrison in Mtubatuba kept the 'tidiest store', and was notorious for specific customer needs. He was known to have kept an extraordinary range of printed pine Fuji cloth. When showed a new colour card said "Well, if you keep this range for me, I'll take four"... "Which patterns?" I (Ovens) asked. "Not pieces," he said with a pained expression "bales". In one crack I had sold 200 pieces of material' (Ovens 1999:34).

Contemporary traders have different, more perfunctory relationships with sales representatives. Mass communication and efficient road networks have affected this affiliation. The long trip to a store at which a commercial traveler would spend the night is no longer a reality. Today a trader can order stock from depots by telephone or email, which is then delivered quickly, facilitated by efficient road networks. No longer does the messenger dash off three times a week to collect the bread on foot. Regardless of scale of trade or location, all the storekeepers that were interviewed received fresh bread at least three times a week from bakeries on a delivery schedule. Improved roads mean that traders nearer towns commute to collect fresh produce. Dedekind times his trips to coincide with collecting his children who are weekly boarders in Dundee.

'Trading has changed totally' says Johnson. He used to order 10 bales of 30 blankets from the Frame Group for the winter season, and 'Bata footwear would come from Rhodesia and we would take 30 cases of 30 shoes per case.' In a district in which a strong baSotho heritage ensures that the traditions of a

distant past are pursued, displayed in the Masotsheni Store are a mere four 'Khotso' quality Basotho blankets and a couple of cheap ones. Johnson and I agree that nowadays blankets are bought on credit at large department stores such as 'Jet' and 'Edgars'. Wholesalers such as 'Game' and 'Makro' are more likely to offer cheap prices and when special occasions arise such as a wedding at which blanket gifting is necessary, people are more inclined to visit these wholesalers in the big cities and buy in bulk. In a shop which used to be festooned in cloth, nowadays Johnson stocks only some 'Fasco' for the Zionist and Shembe uniforms, and some calico for burial. Whilst I am at the store a 'Cold Chain' truck arrives in a cloud of dust and a scattering of schoolgirls, bringing frozen food to put into the new fridges that Johnson has just bought.



**Figure 5.10: Pension day at Motala Store, Ahrens, Natal (Photo:Author 2006)**

The Hut/Poll Tax round has been mentioned. This official routine was superseded by the monthly pension payout which has been one of the most enduring participatory roles of the trading store. From inception, pension days were conducted at the trading stores. Ursula Morrison can remember their first one at Makakatana at which the Resident Magistrate, then a man named Hassard, felt obliged to mention to the accumulated gathering that 'young brides and girls' were not the intended beneficiaries of the pension. How times have changed. Magistrates participated in a more regular round than Hut Tax collection. The trading store was often the seat of the roaming magistrate *in lieu* of a formal court building, and routine Circuit Courts would be held at these

nodal points. This meant that the store would be a destination point for many people on the day, increasing the numbers of potential purchasers.

Another elderly informant describes a relative that practised as an oculist spreading the word of his impending visit through traders, using the store as a dissemination point for news.<sup>143</sup> Clinics too are mentioned. Jean Aadnesgaard remembers that the doctor arrived weekly when she was a small child growing up at iNtikwe Store. She suspects that this man must have been on a government retainer because nobody ever paid him. When she and her siblings were sick they joined the queue as well. Johnson remembers a good friend, possibly this very same doctor, the late and celebrated Anthony Barker as being a man 'well before his time'. Barker was working at the Charles Johnson Memorial Hospital at Nqutu and he would travel to Masotsheni every Monday to hold a clinic. Johnson clearly remembers Barker as remarking of the traders that they 'Elevated the African from the floor to the bed'.

In the same period the Nqutu police force would carry out regular horseback patrols in the rural areas, an endeavour which would take some days. Besides the security presence they usually stopped at the stores with news. Johnson found this remembered round a poignant contrast to the recent incident in which his new Pakistani business partners were attacked by five masked gunmen. The police did not respond, prompting Johnson to drive to St. Augustine's himself to ensure that the Nqutu police arrived.

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<sup>143</sup> Peter Brown, founder of the Liberal Party which was banned during the late apartheid era, was himself banned and had restrictions placed on his mobility. The trading store on his farm in the Natal Midlands was a conduit for keeping the underground resistance movement information channels operating.

## 5.2 Conclusion

Scrutiny of representative structures contemporary with the early vernacular trading stores suggests that the traders were implicit in their communities and lived in the space of the latter, rather than the constructed proprietorial hierarchies of the late Victorian and Edwardian periods and those of traditional Zulu homesteads. The function of the veranda as an interstitial space which could supplement the trading floor space is noted. With the silence of the customer voice, these spatial relationships reveal the degree to which traders operated socially amongst their customers, living in which was virtually a public space.

These traders relied on different types of social communities both static and mobile which, to some degree perpetuated a vestigial English culture and at the same time afforded them security across Zululand in the form of contacts, accommodation, and commercial support. Technology, accessibility and a vastly different political and social landscape have changed this. Whereas in the past proximity may have been relatively distant, family networks in similar vocation kept in close contact through fixed social rounds such as attending a central church on Sundays. Today these same families are far-flung across the province and the world, working in different professions, and now in virtual contact by e-mail, skype and the cellular phone.

Despite this, most of these Zululand traders still live in KwaZulu-Natal. Although many of their children live abroad, most are too reliant on their pasts and their trading upbringing to emigrate. Their children do not trade as their parents and grandparents did, choosing rather to pursue professional careers or adopt similarly unconventional lifestyles as lodge keepers, hoteliers and wholesalers.

Being resident, the traders are people that are vulnerable to all the vagaries of living life in what is still, in some senses, a borderland society. Land claims, crime and violence, HIV/AIDS and marginalization due to burgeoning competition by *spazas* are some of the problems that they face. However, the connectivity of the social community which established those successful enterprises, kept them in business and offered support systems when needed, are still operable although they exist today in a very different paradigm.

## Chapter 6: Evoking memory and creating identity

*You can't make a home in a dusty wagon* (Isaiah Bowman 1931)

The preceding ethnographic chapters are largely anecdotal, presenting stories as they are remembered or events as they are still happening around the centrality of the Zululand traders, with the structures that defined them as a relatively constant background. The ethnography is used as a vehicle to discuss different facets of trade, investigating aspects of the store building and its planning which were effected or affected by the political, commercial or social threads drawn out from the morass of trading culture.

Indeed, the working research question 'Why is the generic trading store building so lodged in communal memory, and what does its space reveal about the various and complex relationships of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Zululand traders? and, How are the memories of this social and material culture manifested today?' intimate a perceived connection between static building and social practice. Respecting the central focus of the structure, Victorian academic and activist John Ruskin fused the connection between memory and buildings when he said of architecture, 'we cannot remember without her' (Ruskin 1901:324).

### ○ **'Odour of raisins!'**

Gaston Bachelard describes unique smells as 'signatures of intimacy' (Bachelard 2001:90). Smell is one of the primary responses that people associate with the physical trading store building. In delivering lectures, the presentation of a single graphic of a trading store to a group of people evoked strong and immediate memories for members of the gathering, which were not limited to smell: all remembered totally different things; textures, relationships, personalities, festooned cloth, the tactility of tobacco in big storage bins. The memories hang from the ceiling of the shop on big butcher hooks. There is no one common memory and there is no one particular store; reminiscence is an integral part of the trading store, which does not depend on the materiality or physicality of one particular place. People remember traders and trading stores in East Africa, the Transkei, the old Transvaal, and Lesotho, all from the evocation of a single photograph.

The synergy between space and memory has been addressed by many authors however it is usually limited to specific spaces and participants and generally refers to a domestic environment (Waterson 1991, Bachelard 2001, Bahloul 1996 amongst many others). Significantly, the space and operation of the trading store is a commonly shared experience which has entered the realms of collected memory (Young 1993:xi). Thus, the concept of the trading store as a generic institution onto which is pinned a series of different, individual recollections contributes to the construction of a group memory and, for South Africans, adds to a national memory. The first part of the chapter discusses the materiality of the building, the process of creating an architectural idiom, and its subsequent replication; in itself a physical vestige of memory. It then suggests why the building acts as a repository for collected memories, and how this possibly came about.

Given that the original interest in trading stores was stimulated by this same nostalgia, understanding the strong evocation stimulated by the tangible structure of the building leads to the manner in which these spaces framed and constructed the identities of the people that occupied them. This chapter seeks further to explore that, for some, identity is intimately connected with the physicality of place, or 'lost' place, and the metaphysicality of experience.

- **'Trading is in the blood'**

The second half of the chapter discusses the relation of memories and their role in the creation of identity. It explores the ways in which people remember, the types of memory employed, and the manner in which reminiscence is employed to justify actions both in the past and today in which personal memory is coloured by recall and enhanced by the present.

Initially, the individual, reflexive recollections of the traders specific to them and their lives may appear as independent factors in identity formation, rather than forming part of a shared collective. However, thematic arrangement allows commonly shared personal experiences (although they may be individually *different*) to be constructed, and forms the kernel of the varied understandings and practises that frame a trading identity.

The nostalgia of bravado and living out similarly challenged lives on the 'frontier' is a predominant theme, enhanced by iterations of isolation. In addition, the fond memories of relationship with customers in a better time could be viewed as paternalistic, but they reveal a reciprocity that existed during the apartheid era between groups which the government actively tried to separate. A commonly articulated experience of dispossession permeates the discourse, a recurring theme in the trading history of Zululand. These main threads combine to construct identity as 'traders' in a time when trading has changed fundamentally in all of its environments.

Introspectively, most traders independently and voluntarily described that, although they worked hard, they had 'fun times'. Many felt strongly that they had trading 'in their blood'. These two statements reflect a nostalgic view of the past, and simultaneously suggest the construction of a real sense of identity as 'trader'. This chapter will continue to weave ethnographic material together with discussions on memory, and use this explain the role of memory in the creation of identity of the Zululand trader. Recounting these different types of memories, linking them into themes and exploring the context of their relation, aids in understanding the manner in which Zululand traders, by virtue of their inheritance, common experience and shared dispossession, identify themselves as traders in an altered world that rarely supports such institutions any longer.

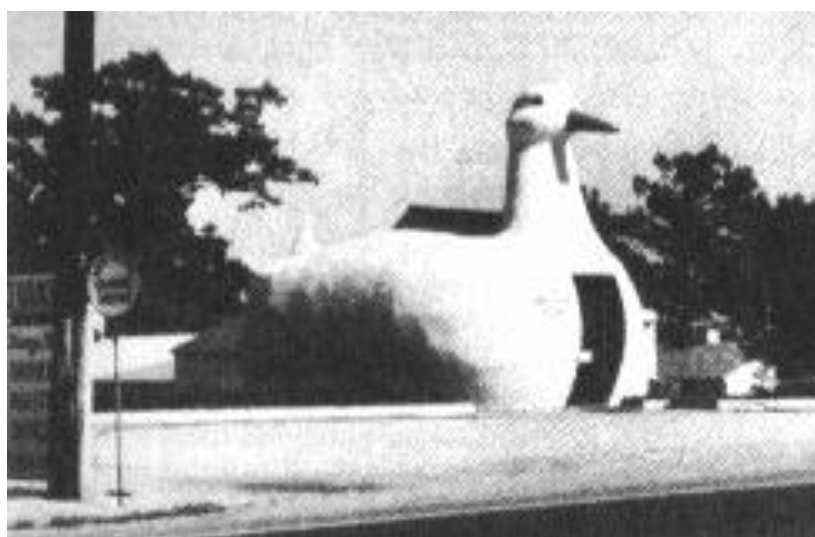
This chapter links two seemingly disconnected threads scrutinizing the role of memory. It commences with the tangible structure of the trading store, deriving the construction of an architectural idiom onto which is pinned a series of different, individual memories. These assimilated components contribute to its impaction in collected memory. Using this amalgam of the material and the immaterial as a framework, and by viewing the trading store building as the one space that constructs a common cultural identity of trade, the social memories are then investigated in its presence and its absence for clues that contribute to identity formation.

## 6.1 The buildings and their activation in 'collected' memory

The connection between memory and the trading store buildings is twofold. Firstly, the architecturally iconic form<sup>144</sup> of the classical trading store is replicated in the construction of *spaza* shops: a memorial in itself to a perception of trade as an occupation with connotations of wealth. Secondly, the generic trading store building stimulates and holds memories of those people who participated in its operation, firmly linking the tangible with the intangible.

- **Constructing an 'archetype': replication and re-inscription**

The Modernist trading store's form is described by its function, thus it 'reads' as a trading store which sells everything from a 'pin to a plough'. The Modernist-derived Post-Modern *spaza* shop cannot be similarly interpreted using this framework, and is better digested employing Robert Venturi's approach to Post-Modern architecture. Using metaphorical examples such as the chicken restaurant constructed in the form of a giant duck (Figure 6.1), Venturi explores and embraces the whimsy, the decorated and the multi-faceted (Venturi 2003:792). The duck's sculptural, avian form would not normally suggest the sale of fast-food, resulting in a re-situation of established tropes and expectations. This inscrutability has parallels with the *spaza* shop constructed in the symbolic form of the trading store, in which its comparatively minimized function is not read from its shape. The *symbolic* form of the building dominates.



**Figure 6.1: The 'Long Island Duck' as analyzed by Venturi (Venturi 2003:801)**

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<sup>144</sup>Chapter 2 described the background of the architecturally Modernist stores in order to contextualize further discussion. It has been stressed that these stores constructed from 1950 onwards have served as the template for the new trading stores, the *spaza* community shops.



This embodied symbolism places the *spaza* shop as a *pastiche* of the trading store, in which the 'symbol' of 'store' has more value than the scant trade that it actually carries out. The *idea* of trade is replicated.



**Figure 6.2: Zamokuhle Spaza Shop: the duck and the shed? (Photo: Author 2006)**

Venturi's trope of the 'decorated shed' is relevant when discussing the *spaza* shops. It is described as a simple functional box appended with decorations and signage, which may indicate its function but actually have little to do with what is going on inside (Ibid:792). In the case of *spaza* shops, such embellishment could refer to the dominant signage on the parapet wall, since they are littered with colour and logo, advertising maize meal, tea, sorghum beer and even batteries (See Figure 6.2). *Spaza* shops are not what they display. Furthermore, Venturi's famous sketch of a box with a big sign above it saying 'I am a Monument' is evocative. Extrapolation of the idea suggests a fundamental imbalance, in which the apparent function of the *spaza* shop building is as a vehicle for advertising, rather than trade, even if in diminished form. The *spaza* shares similar Post-Modern architectural treatments with other inverted spaces such as shopping malls, theatres and casinos. Given that historic trading stores provided inverted spaces which were owned by all, a memory of inversion and inclusion is perhaps perpetuated in the highly decorated *spaza* shops today.

As previously noted, the continual use of Modernism by *spaza* shop owners suggests minimal baggage on their part, despite their resemblance to the prevailing official architectures of apartheid. Little evidence connects the architectural Modernism of the trading stores with hegemonic practise or act. The solution to the enduring popularity of this idiom thus lies elsewhere.

Mr. Chili, an African trader at Amatikulu declared, 'We were the Sol Kerzners<sup>145</sup> of the area.' In the 1960s, their family store was established in the required manner. His father applied for the store site, trading licence and mortgage bond, submitted plans according to requirements and was subjected to regular authoritative checks. The proceeds of this relatively small store sent Chili and his siblings to school and university. They traded and made money. Their store *meant* money. This impact of the 'idea', the wealth metaphor, of the trading store in the diverse cultural landscape is one which transcends culture, politics and economy. This notional transfer and resultant formation of an architectural trope for trade have resulted in the 'shared idea' and the construction of a 'store' archetype. Ronald Lewcock says that 'The concepts (of architectural designs) must exist in the mind before they are built in reality. And in this way works of architecture naturally reflect the structure of the mental models that formed them' (Lewcock 2006:200). Considering the trading store as an iconic artifact of architecture or archetype, reinforces its immediate recognition and assists in describing it and according it status (Fisher 1992:21). Lewcock elaborates,

The important point is that this process, or one very like it, is likely to give rise to 'shared' ideas which have the strength of 'archetypes.' Such ideals or concepts would take two forms: (1) those common to all mankind; and (2) those belonging specifically to one society. (Lewcock 2006:201)

Thus this embodied meaning of the structure is connected to both time and place. An artifact with a specific meaning is created as it has value for those people or peoples in whose cultural system it operates. The archetypal trading store is 'recognized' by specific geographically and chronologically situated multi-cultural societies across the eastern seaboard.

For the *spaza* shops, Modernism at this detached level embodied ideas of modernity, wealth and entrepreneurial spirit rather than the expected connotations of power and authority, reinforcing the replication. The direct 'plundering' of the format of the old stores for the *spaza* shops is deliberate and chosen, and directly referenced rather than employed ironically (Jencks 1992:23). Melanie van der Hoorn explains this phenomenon in part. In referring to relics of the Berlin Wall she suggests that the 'social life' of an object can be

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<sup>145</sup> A South African hotel magnate.

extended, that 'a fragment gets the character of a (secular) relic, the object in itself - owning it, touching it - has a major relevance and the belief in the relic's inherent qualities determines its further social life' (Van der Hoorn 2003:193). This deliberate adoption of the codified trading store idiom for the *spaza* by African traders is reinforced by Susan Vogel's statement discussing assimilation in Africa, that 'imported objects, materials, and ideas are selective and meaningful....they are interpretations grounded in pre-existing African cultural forms.....they contribute to a continuous renovation of culture' (Vogel 1994:3). This suggests that this transfer is a re-inscription of an institution of value, a re-owning, but in a different framework. Gupta and Ferguson state that in the 'postmodern' context, space retains its relevance and becomes 'reterritorialized' in an altered fashion to that of Modernism (Gupta & Ferguson 1997:37). Similarly, *spaza* shops reflect a re-territorialization of the idiom of the trading store by the historic user (customer) and not the historic owner (trader), by the previously dispossessed and the recently empowered. Certainly, the cultural process of transmitting the vernacular between generations continues, perpetuating the mutation of the vernacular Modernism of the trading store into the *spaza* shop, purely because of the symbolic value of the store. The internal and external forces that informed this continued transmission need to be scrutinized.

Figure 6.3<sup>146</sup> (overleaf) describes a continual interface between settler and African vernacular architectural approaches contiguous with the evolution of the trading store, a structure which would have been new to the African customer. It works chronologically from vernacular origins, to the production of the generic Modernist store which informs the genre of the *spaza* shops. The subset in the Venn diagram is the continuum, the store. Its is construed socially as a liminal space, architecturally as a fusion of western aesthetic and construction practice with indigenous materials, and commercially as an area which was brokered using goods, and between goods and cash.<sup>147</sup> This common ground was symbiotic, providing mutually beneficial space and functions.

<sup>146</sup> This diagram is rooted in a similar construct by Rapoport who describes the 'ideal' set of differences *within* traditional groups and a grey area *between* traditional groups (Rapoport 2006:188 Fig 10.3).

<sup>147</sup> Lawrence Taylor discusses assemblages in Irish homesteads, contextualizing objects firmly in the spaces they occupy, suggesting that room spaces can be 'transformative' and facilitate liminal processes (Taylor in Birdwell-Pheasant & Lawrence-Zuniga 1999:224).

The hatched sub-sets represent the continuity of the 'trading space' and its 'ownership' by both trader and customer, embodying the social and economic functions of 'trade'. 'Ownership', depicted in Figure 6.3 as a fully-hatched circle, has been appropriated entirely by the heirs of the archetype, *spaza* shops.

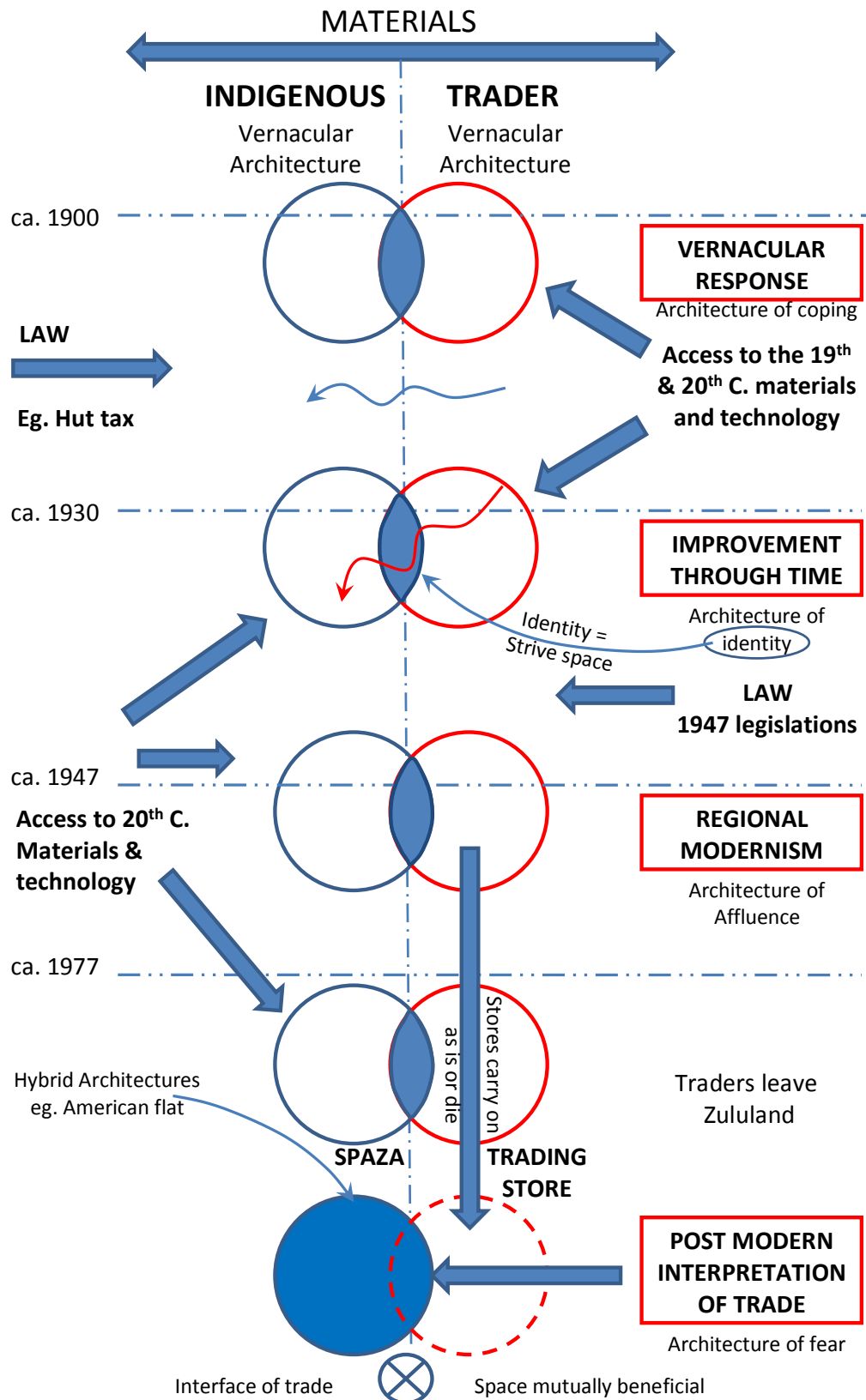


Figure 6.3: The middle ground as extrapolated from the architecture ( Veldman 2010)

Other authors have tackled similar cultural interfaces. Discussing the work of Berleant-Schiller and Edwards, Mari-Jose Amerlinck discusses the ‘creolization’ of architecture, suggesting that such a term ‘emphasizes the syncretic reformulation that results from the blending of different cultures’ (Amerlinck 2001:17). Referring specifically to Riva Berleant-Schiller’s work on Moravian Mission Settlements in New York, she credits her analysis within the context of power in colonial interactions, in which the Native American is ‘disempowered’ by having to adapt to new cultural influence and its material manifestations (Amerlinck 2001:18). Figure 6.3 shows that similar synthesis was not common in Zululand. African indigenous vernacular architectures prevailed with the input of new materials and technology, whilst the traders adopted the language of regional Modernism in their general structures. The two groups produced separate material cultures in tandem for decades.

The continuum of the physical, social and cultural interface represented by the hatched area in Figure 6.3 needs to be addressed. Roxana Waterson says that,

Rules about the uses of space provide one of the most important ways by which the built environment can be imbued with meaning; reflexively, that environment itself helps to mould and reproduce a particular pattern of social relations. (Waterson 1991:167)

The embodiment of memory in the ritual and drama of the mutually negotiated trading store floor is perhaps strongly connected to this use of space and the constitution of patterns in the replication of new hybridized, re-territorialized spaces. Simon Bronner suggests that since similarities exist in the communal promotion of ideas, a series of culturally and socially determined precedents ensures the generation of the forms (Bronner 2006:27). Thus the hatched areas, a notional interface, contain the tradition of trade and the social processes that accompany it, building on the familiar and iconic institution of the trading store even though its ultimate manifestation in the *spaza* shop is functionally foreign to its precedent. Bronner’s assertion suggests that the trading store-*spaza* hybrid can be considered as a vernacular middle ground. It operates as a median resulting from the social and economic functioning of the trading store, and is mutually negotiated from cultural and aesthetic perspectives, enabled by the provisions of new materials and enforced by the law. The trading store structure is appropriated by the customer base which has

not simultaneously altered its 'tradition' or vernacular to conform to new architectural paradigms.<sup>148</sup> The derivation of the form of the *spaza* remains purely metaphorical, representing the specific function of 'trade'.

This replication serves to entrench the encoding; as Fisher says 'the persistence of the artifact preserves its agency as message bearer. Past values and meanings can be continually transmitted into the present' (Fisher 1992:18). This factor continues to keep the artifact relevant and alive in a cultural system which may be rapidly changing. This explains why the format of the nationalist-apartheid legislated reconstructed store buildings of the 1950s is extant today as thousands of *spaza* shops in drastically reduced and miniature forms.

As pastiche and a marker of modernity, the *spaza* shop has parallels. Discussing the contemporary landscape of Ballyduff in Ireland, Donna Birdwell-Pheasant refers to the locally-coined phenomenon of 'bungalisation', referring to newly constructed dwellings that may be markers of modernity for their occupiers, but are simultaneously badly planned and tasteless against the backdrop of historic structures (Moore, cited in Birdwell-Pheasant 1999:122).

Their siting and often flamboyant architecture are perhaps symbolic of a new type and quality of linkage to place. These bungalows are clearly *on* the land, but are not *in* the landscape, not *of* the land in the way the old homes were. (Ibid:122)

Similarities exist. The *spaza* is placed socially, commercially and physically 'on' the land, but is not situated within the landscape (see Figure 4.2).

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<sup>148</sup> Current African vernacular architecture is developing distinctly differently to Modernism. In a parallel example Marcel Vellinga quotes Marshall Sahlins' example of the Yupik and their unchanging traditions in the face of modernity (Vellinga 2006:86).

- **Activation in memory and the formation of a repository**

More abstractly, the tangibility of the store, its materiality and its archetype, is directly related to intangible components which link the building to memory. Through the energy of repeated actions, impulses impact themselves on the fabric of the structure, resonating with those who participated in its operation and experienced its spaces. Thus the intangible qualities of the building are reinforced and activated by personal and group practise and ritual relationship.

Joëlle Bahloul addresses this phenomenon. Referring to her ancestral home at Dar-Refayil, she says that,

Domestic space and objects are more important for their symbolic than for their practical function. This is so because the repetitiveness of their past use has inscribed in them and the associated social exchanges in the cultural order. While being used they were present in *thought* and transferred into the register of memory. Thus memory effects the shift from the practical to the symbolic. (Bahloul 1996:129)

In this process of activation, the archetype of the building becomes infinitely more charged, and this nuance leads to impaction in the memory. The trigger of repeated action enlivens and reinforces the relationships within the space of the store and they activate the space. Those memories which hang on hooks in the fabric and space of the store are then plucked off and selectively re-consumed in their verbal retelling. The intangible is thus securely lodged in the tangible.

- **Repositories**

Geoff Johnson and his sister Dee had spent a Sunday driving around all the stores that they remember. 'It was depressing' Dee declares, of all the functioning businesses which she remembers and of which she formed part.

Silutshana and Ngwebeni Stores were both operated in desultory fashion by the current owner of the Nqutu tearoom. Nkonjane Store, constructed of Ladysmith Bluestone, was inoperative. Others have completely gone: of Nkandi Store, which in the past had consisted of three houses and a trading store, 'Not a brick was left.' Vant's Drift too, has gone. Mangeni Store was a barricaded ruin, unoccupied with a half-built *mjondolo* (shack) next to it. Phindu Store at Magogo operated as a *spaza*, and the substantial house that Dee had run was occupied

by goats. Times may be different and Dee Hay's recollections are somewhat enhanced. The reality of her past experience is extended by imagination, and dreams and daydreams are the mechanisms for memory. Bachelard said:

...the places in which we have experienced daydreaming reconstitute themselves in a new day-dream, and it is because our memories of former dwelling-places are relived as daydreams that these dwelling places of the past remain in us for all time. (Bachelard 2001:88)



**Figure 6.4: Remains of Vant's Drift Store (Photo: Author 2010)**

"Why"?" Johnson asks.

"think about this...why is there a comparatively substantial store building, and a substantial house building which is derelict, sometimes most of the materials removed,<sup>149</sup> and a makeshift *mjondolo* erected next to it? Why don't people just occupy the store buildings?"

In a socio-economic climate in which poverty, HIV/AIDS and lack of housing exist at similarly high levels, why are the materials of some of the stores not appropriated whereas in other areas buildings are stripped clean overnight? Why are people not living in these structures, taking advantage of the shelter that somebody else built and usually more extensive than the *mjondolo* shack? Amongst the Irish, Donna Birdwell-Pheasant describes the transition from traditional dwellings to new structures. She notes that 'ghost structures', the old stone houses and barns 'stand mute watch over the changing landscapes of a new generation' whilst their dated materials are not recycled in the construction of new homes out of prestige new materials (Birdwell-Pheasant 1999:122).

Prestige materials such as brick and corrugated sheeting comprised many of the old trading stores. They remained intact as such long after being handed

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<sup>149</sup> Compare this statement with Lowenthal's comment regarding the mining of structures of antiquity in the pre-industrial past to the destruction of stores (Lowenthal 1985:xvi).



over to the KwaZulu Government, and some have been recycled only recently. A more nuanced rationale is necessary to explain the complete demolition of some structures, and almost a reverent retention of others. It is suspected that the answer may lie in the conclusion by Barbara Bender, who, speaking of the Sarsens at Stonehenge, says that the,

...empowering of the stones, or other elements in nature, is dependent upon the particularities of the social, economic and political relations, and is part of the process through which people are both created by, and creators of, the world in which they live. (Bender 1998:67)

Mark Edmonds, Bender's discussant in the same publication, describes evidence of late Bronze Age people operating what he refers to as 'the lattice-pattern fieldsystems' *around* Stonehenge. He says,

...they're *still* respecting the monument. They don't encroach. The monument may not be actively used in rituals, but it still occupies a place in myth and oral tradition. A place where ghosts live- they're no longer your ancestors, but they're still very powerful. (Ibid 1999:75)

So 'ghosts' inhabit many of these stores and possibly the 'presencing' of the building itself to a large extent, is part of the 'ghost'. This 'ghost' is not the spook of legend, but rather a series of memories, good and bad, sensory stimuli such as smell, taste, texture and sound, combined with ritual and other experiences which are triggered with the recognition of the structural archetype. Victor Buchli and Gavin Lucas refer to this as an 'absent present - a ghost which is 'unassimilable' and tenuous' (Buchli & Lucas 2001:12).

The memory of the building in the landscape is thus extended to the memory of the building in experience. Roxana Waterson describes a connection between spirit and house, and egalitarian but individual relations to inhabited space. She says that houses, whether inhabited or not, can act as 'ritual sites', and that these iterations of ritual assist in codifying the building with a 'sacred power' (Waterson 1991:116). So too is the ritual space of the trading store. Codified and comprised of myriad colours, textures, smells and relations, all become impacted in memory and are recalled through visual or oral stimulus. The evocation of specific or many memories 'hooked' onto the fabric of the trading

store building extends means that these structures act as anamnestic repositories.<sup>150</sup>

Using ‘anamnestic repository’ as a descriptor for the variety of embedded and individually recognized characteristics of the trading store as an institution, physical structure, and social interface, calls on a variety of discourses. Introduced earlier, James Young refers to ‘memorial sites’ which act as points of reference for what he calls ‘collected memory’.<sup>151</sup> Young studies holocaust sites particularly, and suggests that monuments associated with holocausts are repositories for collected memory, which he defines as ‘the many discrete memories that are gathered into common ‘memorial spaces’ and assigned common meaning’ (Young 1993:xi). The value of the collected memory is that the individualities are recognized as forming part of a whole. With the discussion in the previous section in mind, the entrenchment and recognition of this building form in the minds of the residents of the province, and its replication, is no accident. Understanding this unspoken social value is vital.

Young prefers to call the monuments he studies ‘memorial sites.’ Those such as Dachau and Auschwitz embody the disparate collected memories of the visitor. They remember conflict, hegemony and death, and have deeper meanings for specific groups of people than for others. Although they do have monumental value in the landscape, trading stores themselves are intrinsically not ‘monuments’ or ‘memorials’. However, from the replication of the architectural theme, and the permanence of many of the old structures, their codification in people’s minds is monumental in evoking memories

Following Young’s construct of ‘memorial sites’ stimulating ‘collected memories’, Peter Carrier describes the French Historian Pierre Nora’s seminal approach in which he considers places of memory as not being physical sites onto which people pin their identities, but rather points of interrogation as to how their memories are constructed (Carrier 2000:48). In ‘Places, Politics and the

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<sup>150</sup> An architectural academic, Paul-Alan Johnson posits that buildings act as repositories of memory. However, he discusses this phenomenon in the context of the design process, in which historical references or comfortable aesthetic allusions are reformatted in the manufacture of new buildings, suggesting that secular buildings have minimal references that stimulate memory, compared with religious structures (Johnson 1994:342).

<sup>151</sup> As opposed to collective memory.

Archiving of Contemporary Memory in Pierre Nora's *Les Lieux de mémoire*, Carrier discusses Nora's assemblage of pluralist approaches to memory located in practices, symbols, items and places. Importantly he identifies Nora's published volumes on the subject as 'itself a monument, a symbol and a *symptom* of the political role of social memory in France today, which both reveals and projects nationhood as cultural identity rather than as a politically determined group of citizens' (Carrier 2000:38). This promotes the idea of the 'monument' being a simultaneously tangible and intangible 'thing,' in which a coherence of ideas, concepts and material items *Les Lieux de mémoire*, can collectively form a 'monument' in the absence of continuity through rupture, of environments of memory or *Milieux de mémoire*. Carrier concludes that 'places of memory act as instrumental vehicles for collective memories underpinning social cohesion.' This suggests composite memories that co-exist rather than embedding or supporting minority nationalisms (Ibid:40). Unlike Young's 'memorial sites' which evoke memories and emotions through shared experience of a specific event, Nora's idea of *Les Lieux de mémoire* is broader and more egalitarian. Trading stores were nationally experienced institutions, and did not necessarily rely on any form of direct constant participation to evoke memory.

Gaston Bachelard suggested that 'the house furnishes us with dispersed images and a body of images at the same time' (Bachelard 2001:86). This is so in the interpretation of the trading store as a generic structure, in which the intensity of one particular store can be replaced by the notion of it in all of its components, in the landscape. Even the most intimate participants, the traders, remember the space rather than the layout or the specific fabric of the building, finding it difficult to draw plans of their own stores. Consultation with other trader's memories was necessary in order to re-conceive their own spaces, suggesting that the space itself was less important than the occurrences within and around its confines, supporting the manner in which the abstract form of the building store reconstitutes past and recalls identity. Bahloul says of the occupants of Dar-Refayil, that it is the word that forms the image in memory, and not the image that stimulates the verbal constructions, although both are vital in the full construction of the memory (Bahloul 1996:128).

Although deracination is considered as a factor in the construction of identity, its direct relevance to the building as symbol of removal requires elucidation. A commonly articulated theme amongst Zululand traders is dispossession. The confiscation of their businesses and their removal to Natal in 1977 forms part of their litany, but generally conversation is dominated by more recent issues of contemporary land claims and potential dispossession. The material of the buildings as symbols of a different, seemingly more egalitarian time, are 'remembered places', acting as 'symbolic anchors of community for dispersed people' (Gupta & Ferguson 1997:139). Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson suggest that these lost 'homelands' become generic, that the specificity of the memory in place can be replaced by a common 'intensely romanticized' landscape (Ibid:10).

The openly non-partisan physical spaces of the trading stores and their impaction in social memory, has parallels in Anna Bohlin's work with the Kalk Bay fishing community. Disposessed by Group Areas removals in the 1960s, the original congregations return to Kalk Bay weekly to worship in their churches. Bohlin suggests that these churches are material evidence of the 'streamlined and idealized landscape of belonging. '(There are) no racial tensions, and, importantly, no divisions between those who live in Kalk Bay and those who have moved' (Bohlin 2001:282). The church buildings of Kalk Bay are *their* anamnestic repositories, connecting them, identifying them and providing permanence.

Zululand traders cannot return to inhabit the places of their past, as does the Kalk Bay church community. Liisa Malkki's Hutu refugees are similarly exiled, and the real physicality of their 'homeland' was inextricably associated with their common identity as refugees, 'a community of displaced people, a nation in exile' (Malkki, cited by Gupta & Ferguson 1997:11). Likewise the anamnestic repository of the Zululand trading store provides a 'retrospective landscape of belonging' for the 'exiled Zululand traders, in which it refers to a past in memory and a 'model of the ideal past projected into the future' (Bahloul 1996:35).

The memories of the Zululand trading store are constructed from a variety of different components; the ritual of trade, the store, the smell, the trader, the

customers, the ancillary functions that they served, the remoteness, the 'pioneer' in the 'frontier'. These components form the *Lieux de mémoire* specific to the trading store, all of which act independently in the construction of separate memories yet are inextricably connected. This leads to suggesting that the trading store in its entirety is both tangible and intangible. It is a collection of *Lieux de mémoire* and operates as a physical encapsulation of Nora's ideas into a single repository of collected memory, an anamnestic repository. As Lawrence Taylor wrote, 'It is precisely those whom history....has made aware of change and conflict that most feel the power of rooms and their objects as anchors of memory and identity' (Taylor; 1999:235)

## **6.2 Memory**

The purpose of the anamnestic repository providing those 'points of interrogation' for the construction of identity (Carrier 2000:48) inextricably links the general collected memory of the trading store to a broader, regional identity. The trader, however, was more specific and participant in the construction of a discrete identity, one which endured beyond practice and existence. Memory is all that remains of trade for many Zululand traders today, yet they continue to view themselves as 'traders'. Their stories are all located in the past, for some a distant past. Maurice Bloch considers that interpreting long-term and autobiographic memories is problematic, as a person's memory is extended beyond the actual events that occurred.

Such recalling defines the person in relation to time by invoking, or not invoking, notions of a past interaction with an external world which contains truth and falsehoods, permanent and impermanent elements, which is, or not, in a state of continual creative dialectical flux. These ways of remembering the past not only create the imagined external world but they create the imagined nature of the actor in the past which, in so far as this actor is seen as a predecessor, refers to those living in the present. (Bloch 1998:81)

The trader's memories present a viewpoint of themselves as actors in romanticized past drama, and re-remembering helps to continue acting out those roles and relationships today. Such recall works at a critical interface between historic and contemporary narratives, and it is often employed to explain what is for many, a challenging present. Few elderly traders today refer to incidents of a racist nature in their memories, and hardly any use pejorative

language in referring to their previous customers. Since post-apartheid society inculcates certain behavioural rules and elements of contemporary liberal practice are often layered upon a less politically correct past, perhaps, this egalitarian behaviour exists for them as a communally 'remembered' memory.

- **Reiteration**

In her luxury Ballito home overlooking the bush and the Indian Ocean, Ursula Morrison puts the jam tin of roses that I have brought for her into water, and introduces her husband Jimmy, wheelchair-bound and mute after a debilitating stroke. She has become the voice of her husband's memories. She relates the much told story about the beginnings of the Morrison trading empire, reinforced in the iteration and relation of others' histories and memories. Jimmy Morrison's father 'Jock,' was 18 when he began to work for Brodie and Challis in 1918. He borrowed money from a family friend to enter into this partnership at Makakatana. Trading suited him and it was not long before he purchased the store at Maphosa, as well as those at Nyalazi and Hluhluwe. Ursula Morrison 'remembers' that all of the original stores purchased by her father-in-law in the 1920s were wood-and-iron with the living quarters attached at the back.

'Jock' Morrison died young at the end of the 1930s. His son Jimmy served in the South African Air Force in World War II and Morrison's widow, Agnes, continued to run the store at St. Lucia. Jock Morrison's brother took over Maphosa Store and built it into a viable concern. At the same time he helped Mrs. Morrison to keep the Makakatana, Nyalazi and Hluhluwe stores operational. Jimmy Morrison studied accountancy after he was demobilized, before returning to trade. Ursula Morrison 'recalls' a 'memory' before her time.

The businesses were not in good shape, only one of the three shops showing a fair return, and the buildings, which were built of wood-and-iron, needing replacement. There were shortages of goods for a number of years after the end of World War 2 and customers would queue for their daily rations of brown sugar as this item was necessary for the brewing of home-made liquor. Black people were not permitted to buy 'white liquor' at that time so concocted and sold their own version of moonshine as well as tapping the *ilala* palm to make palm wine, a potent liquor.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> <http://www.makakatana.co.za/history.htm#why:> --22/07/08

When Jimmy and Ursula married in 1949, her farming background and boarding at school in Eshowe<sup>153</sup> had partly prepared her when she moved up to wild, remote Makakatana with her new husband. She describes *her* Makakatana of the early 1950s when potable water came from rainwater tanks and there was no electricity or telephone.<sup>154</sup> Paraffin-fired Coleman lamps provided light. Although the railhead had reached Northern Zululand, it was still a lengthy journey to reach the rail siding at Nyalazi. These mixed memories, of personal experience and of related experience are common. Joëlle Bahloul addresses layers of similar memories and narratives which support each other; some not directly experienced but rather memories transferred through narrative themselves (Bahloul 1996:127). She refers to these as ‘memorial narratives’.

Maurice Bloch suggests that the reiterative narrative, such as those memorial narratives recalled by Ursula Morrison, is important in the ‘reestablishment of order’ amongst the Zafimaniry. To illustrate this, he relates the events of his random arrival amongst his study group, which became situated for them within an order of narrative explanation, and with the repeated telling becomes a ‘prototypical present’ (Bloch 1998:105). In addition, he conflates these different types of memories saying that,

the characteristic of the individual’s memory of what she has experienced during her lifetime – her autobiographical memory – is not all that different from her knowledge of more distant historical events which she cannot possibly have lived through. (Bloch 1998:115)

Bloch distinguishes between autobiographical memory and semantic memory, and quotes Courtois (1993) and Todorov (1995), noting that the mutating, multi-dimensional and organic nature of memory can render study problematic (Bloch 1998:116). In investigating Zafimaniry recollections of the 1947 anti-colonial revolt which killed 80 000 people in Madagascar, Bloch found that he was collecting the individual narratives told by people in the community. He describes these as a ‘private account’ as they relate to the people of the village, but in the telling they become the authoritative account assisting in reduction of the arbitrariness of the memory, confirming and codifying it. He describes a separate incident. Talking with his adoptive ‘father’ he hears a totally different

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<sup>153</sup> Eshowe is a relatively large (in Zululand terms) town, supporting surrounding rural areas.

<sup>154</sup> Telephones were still problematic in the 1980s as Jimmy Morrison’s letters testify.

story, leading to his suggestion that narratives have different contexts and different purposes. One is a ritual narrative related to community and the other is an *ad hoc* narrative which is produced in one-on-one conversations. He proceeds to distinguish between two different ways of presenting history amongst the Zafimaniry. The *Tantara* is a collective history that aims to 'reduce events to exemplary tales' which are couched in 'moral value', contrasted with the *Anaganon*, which has the purpose of relating legendary events that have no temporal location. He finds that these vehicles of telling 'fact' exist in the same framework as the description of events of the 1947 uprising (Ibid:108).

The ordered space provided by memory as intimated by Bloch in the above paragraph is evident. Many of the informants 'prepare' themselves for my visits. I am seated and regurgitated a considered history of how the stores were allotted, how they were five miles apart and what they looked like inside. Ursula Morrison was no different, beginning with the litany of Challis and Brodie and telling me what she thought I wanted to hear. I had to prod her for some basic details. Where did milk, post and bread come from, and how did they arrive at the store? Morrison thinks that when they took over running the store, fresh milk was provided originally by a local man named Mncube. As the store allotment provided for a grazing area, they soon purchased their own cows.<sup>155</sup> Morrison describes traders having to dial telephone numbers for many of their customers, as well as facilitate some of the telephone calls which were routed through an exchange. In addition, she remembers offering legal advice as well as holding and managing accounts on behalf of their customers. She reiterates the sentiment that these stores stocked everything from a 'pin to a plough', emphasizing that the complexity of relationship between the customer and the storekeeper was very different from other trading relationships, and that over-the-counter service was vital for success in trade.

Like most stores, Lake Store served as a postal agency. Storekeepers had to send telegrams for customers, and receive registered mail on behalf of the illiterate families of migrant workers. This meant that they had to officially identify every recipient of a registered letter, which entailed knowing your

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<sup>155</sup> Alfred Tembe, now working as the maitre'd at the Durban Club, was the herder for these cattle, whilst his sisters all looked after the Morrison children.



customers by sight and name. The post for Lake Store arrived at Nyalazi, situated on the main road, three times a week. When the old man named Maphosa walked from Makakatana to Nyalazi Store every morning to collect the two sacks of bread, he would collect whatever community post was waiting. Morrison notes that Maphosa carried the canvas post bag on a stick on one shoulder and a *knobkerrie*<sup>156</sup> and an *assegai* in the other hand. RH Rutherford describes the arrival of the post at Ndumu in similar fashion.

The post was delivered by a mule cart twice a week to Ingwavuma. From there the post for Ndumu was put into a canvas bag which was wrapped around a long stick which the postman put over his shoulder. We were the postal agents so he would come to our store. He used to carry a whistle which he would blow continuously for about half an hour before he reached the store to let people know that the post had arrived. The distance covered was about 45 km. (Rutherford 2000:14)

At the now closed Lake Store at Makakatana, Ursula Morrison's son Hugh takes a pot-shot at a monkey with his pellet gun. The monkey gets away unscathed. Hugh and his wife Leanne live next door. Their house is set in a large garden in the middle of indigenous forest, overlooking Lake St. Lucia. An electrified fence and remote-controlled gate serve to keep out dangerous game such as rhino. Hugh and Leanne run the luxury Makakatana Lodge, some kilometres from their home in the thickly forested sand dunes. Unlike most traders, Jock Morrison acquired this land freehold, meaning that the Morrisons were not subject to the conditions of the 99-year trading site leases.

'Leanne's father was a rep for 'Spar' or 'OK' or something and he always asks to look at the store, with fond memories. All of this is exactly how it was. I am afraid it is my storeroom at the moment, but I try and keep it tidy. Those bins over there are actually ration bins which were dropped out of DC 10s when we were in Angola.'

Shelves inside the store are piled high, stacked with Jimmy Morrison's records. Boxes of papers deal with staff at the stores, others document Morrison's involvement with the Rural Licensing Boards and the Zululand Chamber of Commerce, and files and ledgers contain all the company's accounts. A perfect incarceration of memory. We peer up through the gloom to the ceiling on which the tell-tale signs of water and rot show lack of maintenance.

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<sup>156</sup> An *assegai* is a short stabbing spear and a *Knobkerrie* a wooden stick with a knob at the top.

'All is exactly how it was when we closed. Here are the rods that we hung cloth from, look at these fish hooks – they are the original ones, all for five cents each. I don't think that I would do anything about the store, but the roof does need a good fix'.



**Figure 6.5: Interior of Lake Store Makakatana (Photo: Author 2009).**

The social, visual and textural richness that this empty space would have once been alive with is absent in Ursula Morrison's anecdotes. She presents an inscrutable and distant history, seemingly devoid of personal involvement and perfected through reiteration.

'In February 1949, James married Ursula Rogers and their first son John was born in December of that year to be followed by four more sons and a daughter – Barry, Pamela, Bruce, Keith and Hugh. Fortunately they were a reasonably healthy bunch because the nearest doctor was twenty three miles away over rough dirt roads. All the children grew up speaking English and Zulu and Hugh spoke only Zulu until he was three. Makakatana is a lovely place for children, especially the boys, who started fishing at a young age but the one big drawback, is the distance from schools. There was no boarding facility at Mtubatuba so all ended up at Eshowe School which is about a 2 hour journey away. Pamela still tells of crying into her porridge when she was sent away at the age of 5 ½ years!' (<http://www.makakatana.co.za/history.htm#why>: -- 22/07/08)

Her memories are verbatim and captured. Hugh Morrison is a child of a different period of trading. His memories are infused with the store, the physical repository that created them. He is unsure what he should do about all of the documents. 'The Alan Paton Centre, at the University in Pietermaritzburg' I offer, given the liberal nature of most of the correspondence and the contribution which a now mute Jimmy Morrison made to his part of Zululand.

From the litanic presentation of the family history, Morrison creates a linear story from a collection of different happenings. Bloch elaborates, saying 'that a narrative is not stored as a narrative but as a complex re-representation of a sequence of events like the sequence of events that happen to oneself' (Bloch 1998:122). Adding inference, such as Pamela crying into her porridge, fleshes out the story and aids memory to parts of it. Comprehending the narrative includes being able to contextualize it in a greater picture (Ibid:123).

- **Palimpsest memories**

Much more animated recollections are told by Hazel Ueckerman, the only living informant who traded throughout this period. She has just turned 100 and still lives at Ubombo with her son and his wife.

Maureen Ndlela and I sit with Mrs. Ueckerman, David Irons and his wife Dawn, as she tells a story of an uprising. Whilst they were trading at Hlabisa, during the war, 'all these Zulus arrived at the store naked!' 'Hawu' exclaims Maureen. We raised our eyebrows until she elaborated that they were actually wearing their *iBeshus*, traditional loin cloths.<sup>157</sup> Hazel Ueckerman explains that the reason for this attire was that they were protesting. A local farmer named De Wet was charging people to dip their cattle, and this fee was not taken lightly by the local Zulu people. In trying to mediate the situation, a local Hlabisa man was stabbed to death. 'Remember David, he was such a nice man', David nods. David Irons, it must be recalled, was still a small child at the time. After his death, the man's five surviving children were cared for by his eldest daughter, who at the time was in her mid-teens. Irons interjects that she later became the postmistress in Hlabisa. Hazel Ueckerman begins to tell a different story, fused with the first. African women arrived at the store laden with bundles of reeds on their heads. In these bundles were concealed assegais. Dawn Irons adds, 'Ja, that was a common way of doing it'. A missive arrived from Nongoma about this uprising. There are few white men around, due to the war, so the Irons family sped off to Nongoma to assist in quelling the uprising. The story somehow shifts to Nongoma, in which a Zulu man riding a donkey declares he is Jesus and

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<sup>157</sup> Maureen is struck that this is considered 'wearing nothing' whilst in her eyes, it may be old-fashioned, but it is still part of traditional culture and usually worn on feast days.

promptly gets shot through the stomach by another African brandishing a Martini Henry rifle. David describes how his guts were spewing out all over the neck of the donkey. Hazel Ueckerman tells how all the women at Nongoma came to stay with her, and how a man named Mabaso, 'he was such a sweet and caring man', patrolled the *rondawel* all night, looking after the women.

David Irons' two-year old mind re-recalls events of a more bloody nature than the more gentle nurturing descriptions of the women being cared for in his mother's memories. Stephan Feuchtwang in Susannah Radstone's edited volume on memory explains this by saying that the transmission of these memories is gendered with different stories passed down from mother to daughter, and from father to son. Furthermore, this intergenerational transmission of memory, is 'intimate yet parental and like memorial and history or tradition bears the authority of a life-giver and of fate – a haunting carried in the formation of habits and anxieties' (Feuchtwang 2000:65). David, a two-year old at the time of the uprising, concentrates on those events which struck his father and were subsequently related to him, whereas his mother has different, more feminine and personal recollections of the ending of the event.

The Magistrate Braatvedt tells the story of the uprising more lucidly. For him it was October 1942. He was serving at Maphumulo, and was ordered to Nongoma to act on a report of an uprising which had already turned bloody.

A certain religious fanatic had succeeded in organizing a gang of about fourteen men and several women. Not much notice had been taken of this man's activities, either by the chiefs or Government officials until one day, when he marched into the Court House grounds, accompanied by his adherents. The men were all clothed in various animal skins, and had a peculiar bundle with them, resembling a large telescope holster about eight feet long.' This bundle contained the assegais. Eventually four of the attackers were killed using 'an ancient muzzle-loader. (Braatvedt 1949:129)

His story continues, *sans* the gory recollections of David Irons with the guts of the fanatic spilling all over the donkey. Hazel Ueckerman recalls the events in Nongoma in both *Tantara* and *Anaganon* fashion, whereas Braatvedt considers them more empirically.

Both Hazel Ueckerman and David Irons discuss those years in Hlabisa fondly, and they intertwine family folklore with fact in the telling of the stories. Ueckerman relates an instance when she had just moved to trading in remote Hlabisa with her first husband Jack Irons. An elderly Zulu man came into the store whilst she was serving at the counter, and pointed up at some unusual grass constructed objects hanging up in bunches. Hazel had no idea what these were, or what they were used for. Getting them down, she handed them to the old *kehl*a who solemnly inspected each one and measured it for size. He then chose one, which was then paid for in pennies. Perplexed as to why her husband was doubled up with laughter, it emerged that she had assisted the old man in purchasing a prepuce cover.<sup>158</sup>

'However formulaic, each inscription varies what it reinscribes' (Feuchtwang 2000:65). Re-inscription of memory through reiteration is minimized when committed to paper, although even these may be the result of consideration of events through subsequent lenses. Roy Rutherfoord's memories are captured in his memoirs. He recalled driving in a Willys overland motorcar with his parents to take up the Ndumu Store. During this trip, the young Roy and his sister suffered bad bouts of malaria and had to be carried the last two kilometres to their new home.

From Othobothini we traveled on an ill defined old wagon track that led to Ndumu. At times we had to get out to walk to higher ground in order to see where the track continued. We proceeded on, and duly arrived at the banks of the Ingwavuma River, a spot approximately 2km from Ndumu store. The river was flowing strongly and was quite impossible to cross by car. There was a small pont which the natives managed to pole backwards and forwards, and onto which our belongings were loaded. (Rutherfoord 2000:3-4)

For a sick child, the clarity of description is striking. Immutable memories such as this are discussed by Rosalind Shaw as being 'palimpsest memories', in which 'practical and discursive memories from different periods become intermeshed, such that one period is remembered through the lens of another' (Shaw, cited by Basu 2007:234). Roy Rutherfoord's described memories are ones which were reinforced by familial relation, as well as subsequent

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<sup>158</sup> *umNcedo*, penis cover of *iLala* palm leaf, *iNcema* grass and string 'A full loin - covering was not complete without the wearing of a prepuce cover' (KwaZulu Cultural Museum 1996:142).

experiences, reiterations and observations along the route often traveled. Bahloul offers a parallel example of the Dar-Reyfayil family reunions, echoing these reiterated palimpsest productions of memory saying that 'Their recollections of these reunions are a discourse on narrative, a narrative of a narrative, a narrative moulded in another narrative' (Bahloul 1996:127).

### **6.3 The construction of identity as 'trader'**

A common identity as 'trader' exists, given the manner in which most traders have kept in contact with each other despite being out of their trading environment for nearly four decades. This is reinforced by their ability to still recall clearly who ran which stores, where they were situated, and where they are now. Once whilst visiting the Batemans, Irene Titlestad arrived for coffee. The Titlestads had owned a number of farms and stores in central Zululand, and had sold their store at Qudeni to the newly-married Aadnesgaards.

The types of memories recalled have thematic roots, which serve to connect the traders and actively assist in the construction of identity. Citing Halbwachs (1980:129) Lawrence Taylor discusses the manner in which social groups employ and manipulate structure and space in order to express their cultural values. This contributes to constituting group identity itself, in that the derived practises and 'collective representations' create and sustain their own materiality (Taylor 1999:230). The Zululand traders similarly manipulate the landscape and histories in order to position themselves retrospectively, in roles that they once carried out as a matter of course. The constituents that are used to construct identity consist of similar memories and reflexive positioning of the recollections.

- **Nostalgia of bravado**

Nostalgia is generally understood to be a form of memory that has direct and indirect consequences. Although the author William Plomer and his time spent at the Entumeni Store are not a focus of this study, Plomer's objective descriptions of his family's move to Entumeni to trade, the situation of the trading store and its micro-relationships, are informative. The decision was

originally made by his father based on a nostalgic and romantic view of trade in Zululand. In 1922, having wound up the affairs of Africans that had served in the war in France, and enduring a couple more desultory years in the Native Affairs Department, he realized, noted Plomer, that there was little room left for him in the new Afrikaner dominated administration, and that his time in the Civil Service was limited.<sup>159</sup> Plomer's father elected that the family move to Zululand.

He had been thinking of his early adventures in Zululand trading with Africans, when he had seen Europeans – including quite unbusinesslike English gentlemen – making their own living at it, an adequate and honest living, while remaining their own masters...to take over a 'native trading-station', colloquially known as a 'Kaffir store', with some land attached, where I could live with my mother and him, our combined energies being given to a happy blend of agriculture, commerce and home life. The main flaw in this plan was that it did not allow for the amount of continuous hard work that it would involve. (Plomer 1984:149)

The Plomer family was subjected to a romanticized idea lodged in memory, which did not consider the hardship and the extent of the endeavour (Shaw & Chase 1989:1).<sup>160</sup> This type of nostalgia is the more commonly expected example. However, the continued iterations of the Zululand traders, juxtaposing 'we had fun' with 'it was a hard life', indicates alternative forms of nostalgia. This retrospective view is couched in tales of bravado and isolation, and acts as a constant theme which is part of the shared experience leading to identity construction. Describing the 'completed' nature of the memoir, Bahloul cites Valensi and Wachtel (1991) who note that the construction of heroes can begin with tales of adversity and bravado (Bahloul 1996:134). Even if fallible, textual sources such as memoirs are important as they present a voice of opinions and ideas. They are understated repositories of information collected over years of intimate dealings, and can speak of ceremonies long disappeared. The notes of the magistrates, some of the richer written oral histories surviving, are peppered with anecdotes and tales of man and beast. They elucidate the relationship between the man that was appointed by authority and the people with whom he worked. Some of the Native Commissioners, particularly, speak with a deep understanding of local culture, and often these works are mini-anthropologies in

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<sup>159</sup> From 1918, resurgence in Afrikaner nationalism, exacerbated by the Union's participation in World War I, meant that English speakers in the civil service began to be sidelined.

<sup>160</sup> Much of this short-lived experience influenced his writing *Turbott Wolfe*, a contentious novel published in 1925 which dealt with inter-racial intercourse and marriage, predating the first Immorality Act no 5 of 1927 by two years.

themselves. JD Smythe, Jack Irons predecessor, was trading in Ubombo when Braatvedt arrived as magistrate in 1921:

It was a wilderness of a place in those days' says Braatvedt. 'Our goods and chattels had to be transported the eighty-odd miles from Mahlabathini, by donkey-wagon. One load was sent on ahead, and we were therefore, able to manage until the second installment arrived. One wagon, unfortunately, had capsized into a *donga*, and practically all the furniture had been badly damaged. Not a single chair was fit to use....<sup>161</sup>.The European population consisted of two constables and a bachelor storekeeper. Later, conditions improved somewhat with the arrival of another storekeeper and his wife. (Braatvedt 1949:69)

- **Isolation and the frontier**

For the Zululand traders, this nostalgia of bravado is inextricably connected to the deep sense of isolation that they all articulate. This boldness contributed significantly to the formation of identity for traders, in that it described frontier challenges and the extent of the responsibilities of the trader. Most traders' lives were carried out living and trading in the spaces of people who had different cultures, languages and needs. Despite the maintenance of some 'English' practices, such as the social rounds of tennis, and gymkhana balls, which involved much logistical arrangement, the isolation from urbane society sometimes became too much. Together with other pressures, it often caused traders to move to urban centres. Florence Bateman recalls that rearing eight small children (three sets of twins) whilst living on the remote trading station at Dlolwana was difficult, and was a major consideration in their decision to move closer to town. Dee Hay at Phindu Store at Magogo, realized when her children went to boarding school, that she could not stand the separation.

This physical and social isolation is intimately connected to borderlands and the position on a 'frontier'. For Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson, borderlands are important as sites of identity formation, in that they may not be physically tangible places geographically, but they shape identity in providing a grey area for the exiled and the dispossessed (Gupta & Ferguson 1997:48). Indeed, they reinforce the idea of 'community' such as the Zululand traders as being united through exclusion and otherness, as components of their identity formation, rather than subscribing to common practises and world views (Ibid:13). White

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<sup>161</sup> Hazel Ueckerman describes the chaotic donkey transport up the mountain as part of her experience when she was trading at Ubombo in the 1950s.



storekeepers moving into Zululand broke their own notional and physical frontiers, inhabiting a landscape populated with a resident 'other', being largely Zulu-speaking people. This action of voluntary exile impacted on their construction of identity, which was formed as a 'meeting point', forming a 'suture or temporary identification' for people in such situations (Hall, cited in Gupta & Ferguson 1997:13).

The customers came from round about the shop, where their grass huts were widely scattered at the edge of the forest. Some of the men may have worked at the sugar mill or on the sugar farms but many simply stayed at home with cattle in a kraal and their wives planting crops such as mealies, sweet potatoes, sugar beans, peanuts etc. The soil is poor so I do not imagine the crops would have been good. (<http://www.makakatana.co.za/history.htm#why>: --22/07/08)

Ursula Morrison relates of the 'other' in her experience, and describes her personal frontiers encountered when moving to Makakatana as a bride. She tells of the early times not with nostalgia, but with a characteristically pragmatic 'this is how it was' approach.

...after about 9 years in the small house behind the old shop and a (sic) baby No. 5 on the way, the present home was built in 1958. Electricity was generated by a Lister Motor & it was many years before ESKOM electricity was installed. (Ibid)

Florence Bateman and Jean Aadnesgaard, both Calverley girls, tell snippets of their life and experience which today seem exotic. The stories are related with the wonder of retrospective memory, describing hardship and challenge as quotidian process. As third generation traders, they were established and dealt with their situation inherently, rather than acting as pioneers in a frontier landscape. Aadnesgaard speaks of the construction of their home at Qudeni whilst living and trading from the store, and the Batemans tell of arriving at their new venture as a young married couple, to find the Dlolwana store in flames. Bravado characterizes the manner in which these stories are told, relating personal experience which they realize is exotic for the listener, but which for them creates a sense of belonging and comfort. Similarly, descriptions by Roy Rutherford tell of battles fought against the odds; disease, wild animals and eccentric personalities (Rutherford 2000). At the same time, in an epilogue to his memoirs, Roy Rutherford says that,

On reading through these memoirs, I realize how very lucky I have been to have been through all these experiences – some difficult, some amusing, some exciting, and am sure there are not many people who have lived through such times. It is with pride that I can look back and think what my folks started. The hardships and the difficulties they endured, especially my mother who was cook, nurse, mother and who played so many different roles.... I feel very proud to have been part of a company which, through hard work and honesty, has grown to what it is today. (Rutherford 2000:100)

Isolation on borderlands was addressed by Isaiah Bowman in the 1930s too:

The end of a new railway line at the frontier of settlement is one of the most engaging places in the world. As a focus of interest for the settler, it is far more important, as a rule, than any of the stations along the way. That is because a railway line once built, temporarily settles certain things about land values and transport that 'freeze' the economic situation. (Bowman 1931:64)

This was certainly the case for people in Zululand when the railhead reached Somkhele at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Its arrival in 1903 has almost entered the realms of legend. Ursula Morrison says in her introduction to her short history of Makakatana, iterating *her* imaginings:

Can you imagine what it meant to live here eighty years ago! There was no reliable transport, the railway line ended at Somkele which is kilometres from Mtubatuba and all the goods for the shop had to be transported by ox wagon over rough tracks from that point. When there was much rain the track was often water logged and another way had to be found wandering around the pans which formed during the rainy season. Malaria was simply a nuisance to be endured if one wished to live on the Zululand coast – just a fact of life. Everyone kept a supply of quinine and although there were sprays which were usually diluted with paraffin and sprayed from a pump action can this had a very limited effect.' This was long before the advent of D.D.T. and aerosols which did much to eradicate malaria. (<http://www.makakatana.co.za/history.htm#why>: -22/07/08)

- **Origins**

'Origin' is articulated in the construct of generational belonging as traders. Joëlle Bahloul refers to active impaction in familial memory. 'Family culture was then in the process of transforming Dar-Refayil into the hearth of its origins'. She refers to the building, largely abandoned by 1960, as gradually moving from real experience into 'genealogical memory' (Bahloul 1996:1). For traders, the construction of such genealogical memory and origin formation focuses on their life in Zululand, as for many their origins are with trade, or arriving to trade. Peter Rutherfoord says of his grandfather 'RH' Rutherfoord that he had traded in the Transkei before coming to Zululand to 'do sugar'. Roy Rutherfoord's parents were farming sugar at Umfolozi until the legendary flood of 1918 washed away their crop. Since 'the trading spirit was in the blood', according to Peter Rutherfoord, they formed a consortium with other Umfolozi sugar farmers, known as the Ndumu Group, and took over Ndumu Store owned by the Von Wissels.<sup>162</sup> Roy Rutherfoord continues with a small child's memories.

The first few years at Ndumu were pretty tough going. My mother did not see a single white woman for the whole of the first year. The Ndumu residents consisted of our family, the shop assistant and one white police sergeant. The assistant was a Goanese. (Rutherfoord 2000:6)

When storekeepers like Hazel Ueckerman started trading, they left a recognized world behind them for a variety of reasons, and stepped, mostly unwittingly, into a new, strange one. Here one had to be constantly on guard for wild animals and sometimes hunt for food, and daily life in the world of the customers needed resilience and large doses of creativity. Jack and Hazel Irons left an economically depressed Durban, RH Rutherfoord a desolate sugar enterprise, and Mark Johnson entered into trade as subsistence farming in the 1930's was unviable. The origins of the Aadnesgaards and Batemans trace back to the mercurial William Calverley, and their identities are tied into the subsequent tenure in Zululand. In the 1930s, Isaiah Bowman said that the early 'pioneers' usually left little behind, so the quality of life in their new home was not of prime importance (Bowman 1931:12-13).

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<sup>162</sup>Von Wissel was trading in the area at the time of the ZLDC and family members are apparently still trading in Swaziland. I have heard from a trader that they left as a consequence of defiance of the Immorality Act as Von Wissel had married a Zulu woman.

- **Exile and resistance**

Common experience is related to the creation of identity. In the case of most Zululand traders, the KwaZulu Government closed down their family stores or expropriated the farmlands that had been worked for decades. Repossession of white-run stores by the KwaZulu Government is often mentioned, and all describe them being passed onto Zulu traders who could not sustain the business due to ignorance and lack of institutional support. Dispossession in South Africa focuses on African and Indian people throughout apartheid, and little is spoken of white people who received little or no compensation. This silenced expropriation is then constructed as a collective memory, an experience shared, contributing in large part to the cumulative formation of identity as trader. It elucidates some of the nostalgia that they express. Bahloul refers to the deracination of the North African Jews and suggests that 'The domestic community no longer exists; memory saves it from oblivion, legitimates it in history, eternalizes it'. This serves to valorize 'symbolic heritage' through an 'irreversible separation between those who remember and the object of their remembrance' (Bahloul 1996:132) and that this past functions as a 'negative of the present'.

Construction of identity amongst Zululand traders could be as much as result of a commonality through resistance to eviction as it is to commonly shared landscapes and experience. This resistance may not be attached to a specific event or act, but may be as a result of the 'ongoing struggle with the ever changing deployment of strategies of power' (Gupta & Ferguson 1997:18). The authors discuss the shifting perspectives of association, in which in one instance resistance is experienced, whereas with another it may turn to compliance (Ibid:19). Either way they suggest that resistance is a strong component of identity formation, as well as a contributory factor in reinforcing extant identity.

Forced removals create different ways of looking at the past. People removed from Kalk Bay as a result of the Group Areas Act in the 1960s, view their time living at Kalk Bay through rose-coloured glasses, and some continue to use this origin in their construction of identity on the Cape Flats. 'The sea is in our blood' say the Kalk Bay residents. Anna Bohlin considers the sea as constructed as a leveling factor: 'There is no apartheid here, *ou pellie* (old friend), the fish don't

mind who catches them' (Bohlin 2001:280). Dispossessed Zululand traders consider their time trading in similar fashion. 'Trading is in our blood' echoes the words of the fishermen, in that the space of the trading store is a similar primordial functioning space. Apartheid may have materially separated some of the trading store floors, but the traders didn't care where the money came from. Anna Bohlin suggests too that the

...fluidity of the sea is metaphorically brought into the sphere of social relations, and a collectivized, idealized identity is constructed that draws on, and is negotiated through, images of land- and seascapes. (Ibid:280)

Identity is constructed through belonging to the exiled Kalk Bay community. The memory of the place left behind is portrayed through the presentation of a cohesive and 'intact' community, an important factor in creating a 'constructive self-image.' For those dispossessed, their current place of residence is cast in opposition to the Kalk Bay that they left, constructing delineations which entrench who they are and why they don't belong there (Ibid:280). The traders who left their Zululand stores present a similarly mythical landscape, in which life was good, compared with now. As the Kalk Bay residents of old say that 'the Kalk Bay of the present is damaged' so too is the Zululand landscape of the trader's memory much changed (Ibid:281). It's not like it was before... even Johnson, still implicated and actively trading, living in 'Natal' and traveling daily to 'Zululand' says 'trading is very different. There was no crime.' Zululand, like Kalk Bay, is a real place which is authentic in the minds of the people who left, and exists as a 'landscape of the past.'

Finally, Bohlin discusses the distance created by the separation of Kalk Bay from the Cape Flats. Traders still operating in Zululand have created similar space: David Irons lives far from Tshongwe and Geoff Johnson distant from Masotsheni. Stephen Cope resides across the Mooi River in Greytown. Whereas Bohlin refers to the ex-Kalk Bay residents considering Kalk Bay remote, the Zululand traders are 30km from their stores, close enough to get there quickly, but distant enough to avoid trading from constantly affecting their lives, a far cry from the past in which the trader lived inside the store. 'The spatial gap between their new life on the Cape Flats and the old one in Kalk Bay is conflated with the temporal gap between the present and the past' (Ibid:281).

## 6.4 Conclusion

The position of the trading store as a vital part of the economic development of KwaZulu-Natal is little celebrated, yet is recognized, evidenced by Brookes and Webb's note four decades ago calling for research on traders working amongst the Zulu (Brookes & Webb 1965:103). As discussed, the encoded architectural message of the store is intimately connected to trade and prosperity, given the proliferation of the *spaza* shops. This alone situates the trading store in memory as an anamnestic repository, valorizing the structures as a vital part of a common provincial history. For some, these memories are souvenirs, points of nostalgia. Susan Steward (1984) reinforces this considering the store as a remnant of an era, relationship or operation. She argues that;

...souvenirs are needed for events whose materiality escapes us; rather than acting as a supplement to our memory, they fulfill a basic lack, and establish contexts of perpetual consumption for an experience that is otherwise fleeting- but not necessarily trivial. (Steward, cited in Buchli & Lucas 2001:80)

Applying this equally to mementoes, souvenirs or monuments, she continues,

...while the souvenir acts as a metonym or trace of an original experience, it ultimately displaces this experience as a point of origin as subsequent narratives focus around the souvenir - the narrative in fact becomes the supplement to the object which now becomes the authentic point of reference. (Ibid:80)

It is thus the *spaza* shops which have brought the trading store into the present since they are now the authentic point of reference. They re-encode and re-explain the tacit function of the trading store building, which is extended to embodying a host of *Lieux de mémoire* which have altered and varied meanings for different people. The encoding of the 'social space', which implies the depth of the relationship with the trader in the maintenance of value in the store, is a major component of the creation of an anamnestic repository. The neutral physical space that the store provided between different clan groups, racial groups and belief systems, together with its allied functions, has not been replicated in any contemporary officially sanctioned community development projects. Thus, the idea of the trading store as a social and spatial construct

endures in the collected memory as an anamnestic repository, physically replicated in the form of the community shops. This point is reinforced by Van der Hoorn's suggestion that architecture's 'social' life can be one that is successfully re-appropriated and reinterpreted, to the extent that it can 'act as an intermediary onto which people can project their memories, frustrations or experiences with regard to the object that used to occupy an important place' (Van der Hoorn 2003:189). Certainly, this idea describes the combination of visceral responses that residents have in recognition, based on connections and networks that the store created in their own memory, and acknowledges its replication with understanding and continuity. The anamnestic repository is one which is subject to constant change. As generations pass, interpretations alter with shifting reference points and variant manifestations of the same emerge.<sup>163</sup>

This chapter has described the different forms of memories that Zululand traders have of their time in trade. It showed that there were different ways of remembering their pasts, and that sometimes many of the memories were learned, rather than directly experienced. Others were revealed as layered palimpsests, enlarged and mutated with the telling. Setting memories of events in the 1940s against documentation written soon afterwards, revealed the extent of the layering of the palimpsests constructed across events.

A theme that runs through all of the memories is the recall of dramatic events, and of the dreadful isolation. Whilst Shaw and Chase (1989) consider nostalgia as good times, however, although all of these events fall into the general category of nostalgia, they demonstrate tangible bravado. Of all the memories and all the nostalgia, it is this bravado that connects them; this bravado is something that they endured and to some degree, enjoyed. Origins, distances, isolation, living in the realm of a very different culture all underlay this boldness, and the sense of identity is reinforced by the telling and retelling of these stories between like-minded individuals. Identity is reinforced in distance, and for many whose stores and farms were expropriated, this 'removal' and relocation would have been calamitous.

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<sup>163</sup> See De Jong and Rowlands in Chapter 1 discussing the heritage discourse.

Significantly, most traders agree that they had good times, and many were convinced that 'trading was in the blood'. Parallels can be drawn with the work of Anna Bohlin who suggests of the dispossessed members of the Kalk Bay Community, that their identity as people now living on the Cape Flats is inextricably bound to their history and past life at Kalk Bay, before the collectively remembered Group Areas forced removals in the 1960s. So too, the Zululand traders have common ground and view themselves as part of a strong tradition which was inherited through hardship, experience and connection.

This thesis has concluded that the place of trading stores in communal memory is due to their role as anamnestic repositories. Their activities, relationships and spaces have been found to have been of vital importance in the creation of social, political and commercial relationships in KwaZulu-Natal and in the old Zululand. A memorial of the mind and memory, the anamnestic repository remembers an institution in its entirety for its whole value, without wrapping it in acid-free paper and archiving it in an isolated social and cultural context.

The *Lieux de mémoire* components of the trading store building and its operations act as evocations in stimulating memory of trade. Individually, these memories have little value, but viewed thematically they reveal the role of recall and activity in the production of identity. 'Exile' and dispossession, commonly experienced isolation and hardship, and origins virtually beginning with trade, mark the narratives of traders discussing their lives and time in trade. Such perceptions create a 'genealogical memory' constructed with the trading store as the hearth of their origins (Bahloul 1996:1). Whilst traders, in their quotidian operations continue to act out their inherent responsibilities inculcated through generations of trade, it is their memories that define them and formulate their world views and identity as 'traders'. This identity is enduring and is not restricted to time, place and grouping. It is an unwavering perception based on genealogical inheritance and an occupation last carried out many years before.



## Chapter 7: Concluding comments

Tim Ingold analyzes the pear tree, a central element in Pieter Bruegel the Elder's painting 'The Harvesters.' He notes that this tree

.....draws the entire landscape around it into a unique focus...by its presence it constitutes a particular place. The place was not there before the tree, but came into being with it....And that history consists in the unfolding of its relations with manifold components of its environment, including the people who have nurtured it, tilled the soil around it, pruned its branches, picked its fruit, and-as at present- use it as something to lean against. The people...are as much bound up in the life of the tree as is the tree in the life of the people...the tree has manifestly grown within living memory. (Ingold 2000:204)

This statement is resonant with the position of the trading stores, and the manner in which they created a focus place of belonging for both traders and local people in rural areas. Like the tree, the trading store was a non-partisan, non-demarcated space, which embraced and absorbed the activities and relationships in its envelope. 'The people...are as much bound up in the life of the trading store as is the trading store in the life of the people...the trading store has manifestly grown within living memory' (With apologies to Tim Ingold 2000:204).

Trading has its roots in the early settler history of KwaZulu-Natal, and it was the precursor to white settlement. Trading in Zululand can be traced back to the 1820s, but certainly, permanent trading posts were set up after the Anglo-Zulu War in 1879. Initially the relationship between these traders and their African customers was good and symbiotic. However, calamities in history such as the Rinderpest, East Coast Fever, droughts and locust plagues increased the reliance of African customers on the storekeepers. Added to this was the implementation of the Hut Tax in Zululand which forced more and more people into a cash-based economy. At the same time, the storekeepers eked out a living depending on the people that they served and the communities of which they formed part. The extensions of the service that these stores provided in a political climate in which people were restricted and movement was near impossible meant that for many rural communities they were valuable conduits of communication, and the benefits were thus largely mutual.

The authorities noticed this, and the physical positions of the stores were used to strategic effect. They were situated by authoritative ruling, and formed ideal tactical nodes for emergency military encampments, circuit courts and collections of Hut Tax, Poll Tax and payment of pensions. Officialdom too, was responsible for legislating, requiring the reconstruction of new stores to follow regulations, and the fragmentation of stores to comply with the laws of apartheid. The effect of the construction of stores in the Modernist style in the 1950s as a result of legislation has had an indelible impact on the landscape of KwaZulu-Natal.

- **Anthropology and History**

The first challenge was to work at the synthesis of anthropology and history. Given the source material and data, this was a relevant framework within which to work, since the study of contemporary Zululand traders is largely contingent on their pasts and what contribution these had to their current lives.

John Comaroff suggests that ‘the analysis of all local systems...begins with a recognition that the construction, reproduction and transformation of such systems is inevitably shaped by an ongoing dialectic between internal forms and external forces’. The dynamic which drives and sustains a community is due in large part to the manner in which it works externally through vertical and horizontal links, establishing what Comaroff refers to as the ‘Dialectic of Articulation’. Similarly, internal decisions play a large part in determining its tension (Comaroff 1982:146).

Comaroff considers this dialectic as being ‘joined in a new order of relations’ which creates social systems and dynamics new to each group, but yet unique in that their own space is determined by those specific actors and agencies that comprise them. This is the story of the white traders in Zululand who occupy this sub-set, denoting such cultural space. Whilst there are generalities, every trader had unique relations with their customers at each store, dependent as much on the personality of the trader as the customers and their chief. Comaroff says that ‘The ratio of determination varies across situations – although local social and cultural forms invariably mediate the direction of historical

movements, even when they are being radically altered by them' (Comaroff & Comaroff 1992:96-7).

The data for this study is varied, ranging from oral accounts provided by retired traders, participant observation in the case of working traders, historical information from magistrate's records and archival sources, to memoirs and published works. Transcribing oral sources revealed inconsistencies against the 'historical fact' determining investigation into nostalgia and memory. These reminiscences formed a large component of identity formation for traders, inculcating inheritance and consequently, responsibility. Most of the 'memories' have not been substantiated empirically as they exist within their own contexts, subscribing to personal interpretations of palimpsests and layers. Rather than presenting these in a challenging light, placing them alongside each other, highlights emphasis, events of note, and threads of commonality.

Thus, the synthesis of anthropology and history is the backbone of this work. The disciplines for me are inseparable, and in this case are immutable since the received and documented history comes from the same archival tradition as that of the study group. The latter present memories, creating informal histories situated in the same period as the archival material, which when working back into it, aids in thickening the original data.

- **Identification of the trading store**

The first sub-question framed a necessary component, identifying the trading store. Superficially, this appeared easy, but only when examined within the greater commercial, social and political frameworks could it be firmly established. Since the architecture of the store influenced the study so greatly, classifying it architecturally and establishing how it was codified and transmitted as a symbol of the 'identity of trade' was necessary. This was exacerbated by the numbers of trading stores constructed in Modernist fashion after 1950, in which the architecture was literally translated into the contemporary *spaza* shops. It is thus suggested that the latter fall into the Post-Modern architectural paradigm in their superficiality, transmission of idea, and lack of real relationship and capacity. They are Post-Modern in the decorated sense, advertising supplied by national brands decorating the whole store and instead of them

being situated within a described landscape like the old trading stores, they now shout through the landscape.

Isolating the idea of trade as a symbiotic 'grey' area between cultures was achieved, extrapolating the concept from the first vernacular stores to contemporary times. It is suggested that even though the *spaza* shop is in a format which should really be loaded with cultural and political baggage, it is the opposite. A trading store acted as a metaphor for wealth, and this is the message that these structures carry. Simultaneously, domestic local vernacular architectures adopt scant Modernist language, relying rather on incremental hybridization. The *spaza* shop is thus an appropriation of the architectural format by the user and not the owner – by the previously dispossessed and the recently possessed.

Given the descriptions of the various forms of the trading store, and situating them more fully in the discussions which followed, it is evident that the trading store building, in both its vernacular and Modernist forms was an architectural reaction to the microcosm of the political, economic and social relations of the traders and their networks.

- **Political, commercial and social Relations**

The second sub-question investigated the political, commercial and social relationships that the traders established. These discussions form the bulk of Chapters 3, 4 and 5.

- **Political Relations**

Political and physical factors enabled and disabled trade. For trading stores, spatial planning was imperative in supporting social and commercial links at a local and regional level, yet their positions as targets of authoritarian whim over the years created uncertain environments, resulting in many stores closing.

Positioning the trading store within a larger infrastructural framework, together with the manner in which store sites were allocated, showed that they formed an important part of a regional political infrastructure. Initially sites were allocated partly to 'civilize the Natives', providing Colonial-made goods for sale

as well as providing an opportunity for Africans to raise money for the payment of Hut Tax by allowing them a vehicle through trade and indirect barter. They provided military points of reference, and thus were of use during the Anglo-Zulu War and the Bambatha Rebellion in 1906. These traders were often compromised in their conflicting duties to country and customer, as the example of William Calverley rescuing women in the iNsuzi bush shows. Politics challenged the lives of the traders. William Calverley had to justify his occupation of his store site in 1904, as the Natal Government snatched lands in Zululand for white settlement. His son and daughter-in-law would have been subject to the legislations of the 1930s and 1940s, increased health regulations, and the challenge of changing the material form of iNtikwe Store. Calverley's grand-daughter, Jean Aadnesgaard's Qudeni Store was expropriated by the KwaZulu-Government in 1977 and inventoried by the authorities reminiscent of her grandfather's time. Today, Calverley's great-grandson David's farm, purchased through trade and indirectly as a result of generations of trading, is under a real threat of a tenuous Land Claim. Four generations of the same family exist in insecure tenure as a result of political whim.

It was political whim that materially altered the store, informing the application of Modernism as a prevailing architectural trend, and creating the basis for the replicated *spaza* shops that bear the symbolic legacy of trading today. Thus, politically, the lattice into which the traders were connected placed them, supported them and rejected them.

#### ○ **Commercial Relations**

Dissecting the identity of the trading store building emanated originally from a separation of trading sectors within which the trading store belonged. This identified the trading store within a group. At the micro-level was the *spaza* shop, in terms of its stock and counter relations, then the trading store, the supermarket and the wholesaler. Whilst it is noted that there is often a grey area between the trading store and the supermarket in the context of the stores discussed, what is important and what assisted in identifying the social relations which made up trade, was that the trader is a physical presence in his store and has direct relations with his customers as well as duties and responsibilities. In addition, these relations are constructed over time and generations.

Commercially, the trading store was as much a consequence of social relations as it was about the money that it generated, and, indeed, this was the most important feature that separated it from other establishments. People would walk long distances to support a store at which they had a good relationship with the trader, and today people still patronize the stores of the grandchildren of storekeepers for this reason. Traders with ill dispositions rarely flourished. The adjunct services that the trader would provide above and beyond the basic running of the store were, and still are, of value. These *pro-bono* supplements served to intrinsically connect the trader with the customers. At the same time, however, these identical economies, together with levels of commitment and the personality of the trader could grow or reduce the businesses. This fluid and sliding scale of operation was imperative in establishing the limits of trading, at both the minimal and maximal ends. Commerce reinforced ties between traders and their community and the wholesalers, making them all interdependent, particularly in times of famine in which the traders leaned on the wholesalers, and the customers on the traders. The trader served as a constant intermediary for dispensing goods whether bones purchased from African customers for manufacturing fertilizer, or goods bought from the wholesaler to sell to customers. These dealings, specific to trading stores, were connected to relationship, and thus fused with the social aspects of operation.

Importantly, the historical position of the trading store in a commercial framework was one which was more or less isolated, save the occasional visit from a traveling salesman, who connected the store to a greater organization of wholesale companies. The reliance on the wholesale companies *by* the trader and the community *on* the trader in times of economic stress is well documented, and these debts tied them all inextricably into relationships of dependence. Indeed, if it wasn't for traders many communities would not have survived, and if it wasn't for wholesalers many traders would not have survived. Thus, the Zululand traders operated within a series of different commercial links with their customers and larger support frameworks.

### ○ **Social Relations**

The strong social connections which involved traders, whether with customers or the interlinked ties with other storekeepers, have been noted above. In the subject group studied, varied links reveal themselves as extant across space, multi-generational, and often through intermarriage with farmers or missionaries who knew the remoteness and intimacies of Zululand.

Trading was hard work; all traders say that they worked hard, but at the same time they declare that it was an interesting life. Sitting in their new lives, away from the demands of the store, in a new century and in a different political and social system, perhaps it is nostalgia, which presents it as being 'fun'. However, young contemporary traders such as Cope and Dedekind are stimulated by trading, and recognize it for the responsibilities that it entails, choosing to run a trading store rather than a business in the city. They both grew up in trade and returned to trade. It did not take long for trading to be 'in the blood', and the reciprocal social relations and other inherited duties are those responsibilities which send retired traders into tribal areas. Here they administer anti-retrovirals, run orphanages or the finances for community organizations, or work on development plans for mission stations, as the service to their community is part of what defines them. The active traders themselves still provide a fundamental social connection to the community. Heinz Dedekind assists in delivering babies on the veranda of the store, and spends time resolving electrical supply woes for his people. Stephen Cope negotiates miniscule details of social relations, lending money to old people in the valley, and working as part of a greater community. Their service to local people is related to other lattices that connected like people over greater areas. Formal structures such as church or the Zululand Chamber of Commerce existed in order to connect people and to provide a support base for a far-flung trading community. Social rounds reminiscent of the colonies (which Zululand was) such as gymkhana balls and tennis existed as social points of aggregation, as does golf and polo-crosse today. When money was available, the Grand Tour of Europe was embarked upon, and similarly, boarding schools chosen dependent on extant economic circumstances.

Distance meant little as long as there was a postman and an itinerant telephone, as the letters of Jimmy Morrison show...and even then, many of these letters are written complaining about the telephone service. Connection with politicians, authorities, researchers, military, visitors, family, and other traders was all possible through this conduit, and the Morrison papers provide a valuable lens through which to view the social lives of the Zululand trader. The Zululand traders thus operated within a series of different social frameworks, with their customers, other traders, officials and commercial support networks. These have fragmented and altered over time by increased accessibility, generational schism, progress and the whims of authority.

Finally, mention has been made as to the fact that these trading store floors offered spaces which were non-partisan in a highly structured tribal society. As discussed, local African society had few formal public spaces, and the layout of the homesteads and the associated rules of occupation and visitation were restrictive. The trading store thus offered a 'neutral' space since it was not of the government, had few political affiliations and was not of the prevailing cultural group if run by a white person. This meant that it could provide legitimate interfaces for the above, which meant that the trader had to be highly cognizant of the social and political processes implicit in dealing with two different clan groups simultaneously. The multiple social functions that the store provided created a 'one-stop-shop' for the provision of food, clothing, communication, credit, medical facilities, and protection. After the closure of the Zululand stores in 1977, these functions were not replaced. Although the ANC government has been aggressive about constructing community facilities such as clinics, crèches, and multi-purpose halls, these are political and partisan decisions. In the Msinga district, each of the six tribal wards has a football field and a community hall/multi-purpose facility, usually constructed in an archetypal Post-Modernism. Each is similarly fenced by razor wire. These facilities are rarely used and are not identified as community spaces, as their process of construction was politically motivated, rather than a socially and politically neutral space for the gathering of the whole community.



It is observed that whilst the original stores, as described, often had the dwelling as an integral part of them, over the years these moved apart. This is not an impact of ethnic difference or the entrenchment of an 'other': Willias Mlambo chooses to live distant from his store, and divorce himself from quotidian demands. Not all traders reside far away. Heinz Dedekind at Elandskraal still lives opposite his Elandskraal store, as do many Indian traders. It is suggested that increasing affluence played a part in this historical schism. More importantly better mobility due to improved roads and access to cellular phone networks mean that some of those still trading can live further away, gaining the benefits of schooling and social groups whilst still running functional operations. It must be stressed that crime is a major factor in traders choosing to live a distance from the store.

- **Memory and identity**

Suffusing the threads of building and memory led discussion on to the transmission and memorialization of the building, both in memory and in its replication in contemporary *spaza* structures. This discussion is described as situated within a changing landscape open to multiple interpretations, and the physical landscape is as much part of the trading store structures as the buildings themselves. Much has been said about the trading store being an 'anamnesic repository' for KwaZulu-Natal residents, a specific development on the complex of tangible and intangible ideas which comprise *Lieux de memoire*. (Nora 1989). It is a point of identity and reference in our worlds, embracing the symbols of 'shop' and 'wealth'.

Carlo Ginzburg points out that every history, even if it is empirical, is a narrative, which is selected at specific points in time (Ginzburg 1981:277-8). Stories and memories play a large part of the reflexive perceptions of their lives as traders, and nostalgia of bravado contributes greatly in the construction of identity – traders were a type; they weren't just shopkeepers, as their roles and responsibilities were defined by their inheritance and the relationships which their forebears had established with their then customers. The manner in which these stories are told provides the history of trade. Much of it may be fallible, but it assists in articulating the isolated and marginal positions in which the informants found themselves.

Most memories in this case rely on nostalgia, as old people now, and living distant from the places in which their memories were constructed. Whilst it is suggested by Shaw and Chase (1989) that nostalgia is a longing for a perceived 'better' time viewed from a position of comfort, these traders look at their days trading with a matter-of-fact approach, a nostalgia of bravado, realizing it for what it was and the irreparable schism in time and distance that has subsequently occurred. These memories, layered, constructed and often conflated, form the crux of the construction of the identity of the trader.

Isolation was a common theme in the memories of traders, and this was inextricably linked to the hardships experienced. A fundamental view of trade in Zululand is its position on a frontier, a borderland zone, in which the traders conducted a pioneer living far from established towns. For many, moving to trade was an economic decision. Generally, discussions involving 'pioneer' and 'frontier' are couched in bellicose action, and whilst these may have been appropriate on the Cape Eastern Frontier and the American West, the Zululand pioneer traders were not in the same position, and, given their lack of fortifications, certainly did not have the same outlook. The settlement then was one of implicated integration rather than colonial imperative. Moreover, they did not own the land that they lived on and lived out their trading lives with an extremely insecure tenure.

The ethos inculcated from trade in Zululand, especially spanning generations, was developed from a complex system of unlike relationships which traders had to maintain and operate within, in order to survive and flourish. On a metaphorical level, the trading floor provided by the store acted as an open space for both parties and provided the stage for the enactment. On the one hand, the trader was living in a physical borderland, on which his or her interactions on a daily basis were challenged by other people, other cultures, other landscapes, other plants and other animals.<sup>164</sup> The customer, coming from his or her homestead, secure in a cultural context, now had the trading store floor as a contained open space for expanding their own social and cultural frontiers, entailing a new tactic of learning how to act to coexist in two

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<sup>164</sup> This is reinforced in the tales of bravado and adventure that characterize the lives of the traders (Rutherford 2000, Braatvedt 1949, Ovens 1999, Rodseth 1980).

different worlds.<sup>165</sup> These world views did not produce shrinking violets, and at the same time, inculcated a close understanding of the interface between cultures. It is ironic that it is the trader of today, whether black or white, that is now living on a real and commonly experienced notional frontier. Secured behind bars, or watched by security guards, they are, following Winer (1991) encased by an 'architecture of fear'.

Traders today are found retired in gated villages, living on tidy or disheveled farms, in modest complexes, in the place in which they traded for years, returned to trade in the same district in which their family is known. There is no formula for how people lived their lives, took the decisions they took, or orchestrated their movements. All were informed in variant ways by different events. By virtue of their constant involvement as traders in providing a necessary service to a community, they developed ways of managing the complexity of sometimes confusing networks within which they were, of necessity, enmeshed. These were not merely a series of palimpsests, but were interlinked and mutually reinforcing. The social informed the commercial and the commercial was affected by the political that in turn is rationalized by the social. Underpinned by these complex factors, a certain resilience, personality and qualities of compassion, couched within a tolerance of different groups and societies, marked the successful trader. Many of these qualities were inculcated, and continue in their current lives. The understanding of personal situations, fluency in language and empathy for context are of prime importance in the identity of being a 'trader.' Most importantly, they exhibit commonly shared experience reflected in bravado.

Latterly there has been a fragmentation of this trading society. This is as a result of both illegal operations and deregulation of trade, the closing of the old stores because of changed communities, introducing new owners instead of the old trading families, or members of these old families removing themselves from the context of tradition that previous generations created. Society has

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<sup>165</sup> A trader in the Midlands, situated in a prosperous farming district describes an old Sotho man, a migrant, coming into his store. This old man was totally unsettled by the concept of self-service, and was at a loss as to how to open the coke fridge. Here, forestry and farm workers, amongst the lowest paid people in the country, would be purchasing their *amaGwinya* (deep fried dough balls) and polony, at the same time as farmer's wives would collect cream cakes.

simultaneously traveled through a post-apartheid period of self-discovery in which once the isolated inclusive stores dominated the landscape, they have now been replaced with a survival generation, responding to providing the barest necessities, living in a hand-to-mouth fashion. However, the idiom of the store survives, referring to an image of the large trading stores in their heyday.

The stories of the traders in Zululand present a simple and positive untold history, compared with the hegemonic litanies of the Nationalist government. New histories, which are equally one-dimensional and linear, highlight 'new' heritage, and its reinterpretation creates similarly partisan sites. Since the trading store existed as a non-partisan, apolitical structure, it contributes to a composite heritage and memory of all people in the province. Residents hang different values and interpretations on its fabric and the variety of memories that it embraces. These 'pegs' contribute to its acting as an anamnestic repository.

It is now understood that the traders, as a specific sector of a largely English-derived society which emerged from different backgrounds and entered trade for a variety of reasons, were and are infinitely connected to the different lattices, social, political and commercial that created them, developed them, sustained them and then, largely, curtailed their operations. These webs were not only local, but supralocal, and initially, specifically imperial. The processes which instituted and entailed the operation of the businesses were determined by the actions of specific people and groups, often with disparate views, cultures and, in the case of magistrates, instructions, within a larger complex of actors and agencies which were driven by personality and ideal. Interaction, in contemporary and historical situations, between the people of KwaZulu-Natal and the traders, had lasting effects on both. Contemporary traders continue in a very different social, political and commercial landscape, whilst those who abandoned trade still maintain their links with communities.

Trading is perceived to have inherited value, being 'in the blood'. The contemporary lives and world views of the people that are or were 'in trade' is a direct result of the varied historical challenges, social, political and commercial, which built the stores and formulated the identity of the Zululand trader.

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## **Appendix: Areas, period under discussion and cultural background of the Zulu, Tembe/Tsonga and Hlubi**

- **Areas**

- **Natal**

This was the name originally given to the area around Durban Bay by Vasco da Gama when he arrived at Christmas 1497 whilst attempting to circumnavigate Africa. It was then extended to the boundaries of the Colony of Natal, as described below, and demarcated the province of Natal from 1910 onwards. The term is used to describe this territory prior to the renaming of the area combined with Zululand forming the province of KwaZulu-Natal in the 1990s.

- **Colony of Natal**

The original land grant was the area around Port Natal (or the Bay of Natal) in 1823, negotiated between the Zulu and Francis Farewell. In 1838 southerly migrating Voortrekkers of Dutch stock and the Zulu fought for land, and the territory was subsequently extended by Andries Pretorius in February 1840. Known as the Republic of Natalia, it was ruled by the Volksraad situated in Pietermaritzburg. This jurisdiction ran from the Black uMfolozi River in the north, to the uMzimvubu River in the south. The Volksraad attempted to remove all Zulus from this new territory, prompting invasion by British troops in 1842, who took over the administration of the 'District of Natal' as part of the British-held Cape Colony. **Note:** When discussing the province in this work, 'Natal' is used to describe that historical British colony which was located between the Tugela and the uMzimkhulu rivers, as well as the incorporated Zululand after 1897.

- **KwaZulu**

Interspersed in the area known until 1994 as Natal are areas formerly known as KwaZulu. These were those locations established for black settlement early in the colonial period, as well as the lands north of the Tugela River which comprised Zululand. KwaZulu was formalized with the formation of the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly and subsequent proclamation of self-government for KwaZulu as a 'Homeland' in February 1977. It is to be noted that the 'Homeland' of KwaZulu never accepted independence from the then South African government, as did the Transkei and Bophututswana Homelands.

- **KwaZulu-Natal**

KwaZulu-Natal is the current name of the province, consisting of an amalgam of those physical areas previously operating as KwaZulu and Natal, and is used in this work with regards to general discussion as well as dealing with discussion pertinent to events subsequent to the combination of the former province and the former homeland after the elections in 1994.

- **Makhathini Flats / Maputaland / Lowveld**

Maputaland is one of the names given to the area in North-Eastern KwaZulu-Natal located between the Lebombo Mountains and the Indian Ocean. It shares borders with both Mozambique and Swaziland. This area is sandy, flat, and difficult to cultivate. It is occupied by a cultural mélange of Zulu and Tembe/Tsonga, whose main domicile is Mozambique. Prominent traders here are David Irons and the Rutherfoords (Ndumu Group).

- **Zululand**

Zululand is the territory north of the Tugela River and is the ancestral stronghold of the Zulu people. It is used as an official term (eg, its annexation as a territory) and as a district, describing the land across the Tugela River.

- **Periods under discussion**

- **Colonial Period**

Natal was ruled by England, via the Cape of Good Hope, effectively from 1843 until 1893, when a type of independence, known as 'Responsible Government', was granted to the Colony, giving it the power to hold its own parliament and legislature. Now known as the Colony of Natal, this lasted until Union in 1910.

- **Union Period**

Union describes the period after the Union of South Africa in May 1910 until 1961 when the Nationalist Government declared Republic. Union was intended as a reconciliatory device between the British and the Afrikaner.

- **Nationalist period**

The Nationalist Period began in May 1948, when the National Party under DF Malan took power, and much of the legislation which was associated with apartheid was introduced (Gilliomee & Mbenga 2007:312,323). Apartheid was the name given to a nationally sanctioned practice enabled by a collection of legislations which limited non-white access to franchise, land, living space and intermarriage. Seminal legislations were the Native Land Act No 27 of 1913, the Group Areas Act No 41 of 1950 and the Immorality Act No 5 of 1927. South Africa was officially still the Union of South Africa through this period until declared a Republic in 1961.

- **Rainbow nation**

'Rainbow Nation' is a colloquial and largely ironic reference to post-apartheid South Africa.

'After being coined by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the metaphor of the 'rainbow nation' soon took on a life of its own. It has been adopted by top political figures, such as Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki. It has been utilized by big business concerns to exhort the broader public to buy some or other commodity in the name of patriotism. It has been advocated by a range of organizations within civil society to advance a variety of political and socio-economic causes. It has been accepted by both the national and the foreign media as the descriptive label of the South African nation. And it has beguiled the outside world into trumpeting the 'miracle' of the South African transition.<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> *Myth of the Rainbow Nation: Prospects for the Consolidation of Democracy in South Africa*-  
<http://www.issafrica.org/Pubs/ASR/5No6/Habib.html>

- **Cultural Background of the Zulu/ Tembe/Tsonga/ Hlubi**

In constructing this outline, the author is aware of the difference between the constructed history assimilated through a variety of means during the colonial period, and later texts, which subscribe to a format and a temporal structure which has become the received history. This is largely due to iteration and reiteration in the last century. Thus, the history of the Zulu people is one which is perceived as such by its proponents in the late-19<sup>th</sup> century, at the time that it was being captured in writing. It is important for the reader to be aware that a colonially produced document called 'The Code of Native Law', which came into effect over a period of time at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, entrenched to a large degree most of the history and culture which is ascribed to the Zulu, and at the same time has indelibly contributed to the creation of the power structures and political systems which exist today. Thus, reading the contemporary culture of the Zulu people cannot be accurately addressed without recourse to archival material such as this.

- **The Zulu**

The Zulu people are a political aggregation of a group of Bantu speaking peoples of the Southern Nguni who settled the southern littoral grasslands between 250 and 450AD (KwaZulu Cultural Museum 1996:11). Prior to the 1820s 'Zulu' was a clan grouping that occupied the area in northern KwaZulu-Natal, along the White Umfolozi River under the rule of Senzangakhona kaJama. They were pastoralists who practiced small-scale agriculture and were relatively settled until the end of the second decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. At this point, a dramatic social upheaval, known as the *Mfecane* (in Sotho, *Difaqane*) displaced thousands and caused a population scatter for many decades from then on. This phenomenon is considered critical in the contemporary issues regarding ancestry, tenure and land. These particular disturbances had been brewing for years, as Henry Francis Fynn noted in his diary written in about 1833, 'The country between Delagoa Bay and the Thukela (River) had for many years been the scene of commotion' (Stuart & McK.Malcolm 1950:1). In this particular case it was an internecine struggle between the AmaNkwane and the Mthethwa people, both large and powerful clans. This bellicose upheaval increased with the assimilation of and eventual 'dictatorship' by Shaka ka Senzangakhona, an illegitimate son of Senzangakhona who was the head of a lineage group known as Zulu – 'the people of the Heavens'. The name Zulu, to refer to a new nation of people comprising different clans, thus comes from this period. Shaka's domination of the surrounding settled clan groups from the early 1820s onwards was a fundamental part of taught national history. Through a variety of efficacious means he nationalized the collection of different and disparate clan groups of Southern Nguni people, who had been reasonably peacefully settled throughout the area that today makes up KwaZulu-Natal. People who did not want to associate with Shaka ka Senzangakhona fled. Some, such as the Ngoni, went as far north as Malawi with others crossing the south-westerly border into what today comprises the kingdom of Lesotho. This part of Zulu history is both relevant and important, as, when the first permanent European traders arrived, the extant political structure was one of recently established 'nation' rather than a motley group of internecine clans with different views on the new European settlement. This meant that early land and trade negotiations were conducted with the Zulu people through an existing political framework, with a specific person, the King, being the negotiator. This

individual would have been Shaka ka Senzangakhona, or his successors, his half-brothers Dingane, or Mpande.

As pastoralists, the Zulu follow what has been tentatively named in the archaeological record as the 'Central Cattle Pattern', (Evers 1988) where not only are cattle an indication of wealth and status, but practically central in that the cattle byre, or *isiBaya*, forms the central space of the homestead.

When the traders and missionaries arrived, they found the African people scattered across the countryside in homesteads known as *iMizi* (*uMuzi* sing.). The archetypal Zulu homestead consists of a number of circular units placed around this centralized cattle byre, with the entrance downhill through which visitors enter, paying a sense of homage to the *umNumzane*, or homestead head. Each wife in this polygamous system has her own *iNdlu* or *iQhugwana*, with an associated kitchen, hearth and woodpile. Children, once they reach an age, sleep in age and sex cohorts, with the young men occupying the area close to the entrance to the *uMuzi*, or homestead. The buildings, consisting of natural materials such as grass, thatch and wattle lath in a region with high summer rainfall, and high humidity, last for a finite period due to activity by termites and woodborer beetle. Maintenance of these buildings is limited through practicality, though should a building have mud *dagha* plastered to the walls, this may be reapplied or patched after serious rain. Homesteads may consist of grass domes, or *rondawels* (cone-on-cylinders) and today, where the central cattle pattern is still evident in rural homesteads, many units consist of one or two-roomed structures either singly or in a group (Krige 1962 [1936], Frescura 1981, Whelan 2001)

The religious life of the Zulu acknowledges ancestral worship, divination through a system of *abaNgoma/isaNgoma*, and treatment through herbalists known as *iziNyanga*. This belief system was affected by early missionary activity, which resulted in a variety of different revivalist forms of worship being created, such as the Shembe, (Nazarenes), and the Zionists, both of which today have huge followings. This is evidently in contrast with the mission culture that permeated the years of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

A Zulu man and his family was awarded tenure on land on which they could construct their homestead, graze cattle and grow crops, by the local chief who reported ultimately to the king,. A series of hierarchical levels separated the homestead head from the echelons of power, reporting through a series of *izinDuna* and ward councilors. This land tenure system operated on a 'borrowed' and not 'owned' method, where ultimately all the land belonged to the King. This is still extant today, administered by the iNgonyama Trust.

The above description is broad with the intention of situating the interested reader, and it must be noted that there is strong regional variation with different districts having different means of cultural and social expression.

### ○ Tembe/Tsonga

The Tembe/Tsonga people occupy the coastal land in the Maputaland region and through Mozambique. Nomenclature is complicated: David Hedges found difficulty in establishing classification, separating the Tembe /Thonga /Tsonga, and preferred to use Ronga throughout his work. He referred to Junod declaring that there was no cultural uniformity amongst this group, and noted that

...partly, the cultural implications of Thonga are to be found in Zulu usage dating from the nineteenth century; Thonga came to have a pejorative meaning – ‘low class person’ or men without cattle. Other words used by the Zulu for the Thonga confirm this tendency; *Nkengane*, poor, low class foreigner, *amahobe*, poor people, and the term *Ntlengwa*, *Nhlenga*, lowlander’. (Hedges 1978:254)

Junod relied on ‘Ronga’, clarifying this as the name that tribes around Lorenzo Marques used to refer to themselves (Junod 1927:15). In the context of this work, this cultural group, particularly those who Junod referred to as Ronga, comprised the customer base for the whole of the Makhathini Flats, as well the area of the Eastern Shores of Lake St. Lucia. Junod’s map shows the boundary of the Ronga people along the north-south Lebombo range, a strong geographical border. He noted that people in the north of Mozambique are known as the Tsonga, and justifies the general usage of the name Thonga as being acceptable, given their original name Ronga meaning ‘People of the East’ (Ibid:16). Tembe is a southerly clan of the Thonga/Ronga people. Glaringly different from Zulu who site their homesteads in an open space,

‘Thongas like to build amongst trees, to protect themselves against the terrible south winds, which frequently blow across the plain, and perhaps to shield themselves from the inquisitive eyes of people passing along the road’ (Junod 1927:311).

The magistrate Foxon noted that the cultural dress of the Thonga people is unlike that of the Zulu, and spoke of their wearing ‘cotton and print stuffs, which are purchased from traders at Delagoa Bay.’ Grain was ground in stampers as opposed to being milled in grinding stones and a married woman had no distinguishing marks, unlike the Zulu woman with her *isiDwaba* and *isiColo*. ‘There is no particular custom as to the mode of building a ‘kraal’’. The houses were very different from the Zulu, and apart from the bell-shaped roof, the door height is related to the height of the wall, and not low in the case of the Zulu *iQhugwana*.

The language is distinct, and many of the women are unable to speak Zulu, although all the men can.’ ‘Fish are eaten throughout the country, and are caught in basket shaped traps (*umono*) made of thin sticks....Perch and barbell appear to be plentiful in all the small pools about. (Blue Book for Native Affairs 1898:C52)

Like many magistrates, Foxon approached his study of the Thonga with an ethnographic mind, noting that many Zulu and Thonga customs are similar, except for the marriage and death

ceremonies. He was mildly alarmed at how young women were when they married. Should Chief Ngwanasi, a powerful regent, have a liking for a girl, she would be obliged to marry him, taking along her younger female siblings who would join the polygamous household. This meant that small children, as young as six years old, left their natal homestead, moving to their husband's *kraal* as married women.

- **Hlubi**

The Hlubi are a splinter group of the southern Sotho living in central KwaZulu-Natal. They are reasonably enigmatic, as a large group was placed around the Nqutu area after the Anglo-Boer War as a buffer between 'white' Natal and Zululand. Geoff Johnson, trading at Masotsheni has Hlubi customers.